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After she resolves to tell everyone that she and Kaoru are in love, Aoi receives a dreaded phone call-- her father has collapsed! Sick with worry, she travels alone to see him...only to encounter a horrible twist of fate!

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OT
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ROMANCE

藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI

15

Kou Fumizuki

TOKYOPOP

藍より青し 15

AI YORI AOSHI

BY
KOU FUMIZUKI

藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI™

VOLUME 15

STORY & ART
BY
KOU FUMIZUKI

TOKYOPOP®

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

Ai Yori Aoshi Volume 15
Created By Kou Fumizuki

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ISBN: 978-1-59816-202-8

First TOKYOPOP printing: February 2007
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Printed in the USA

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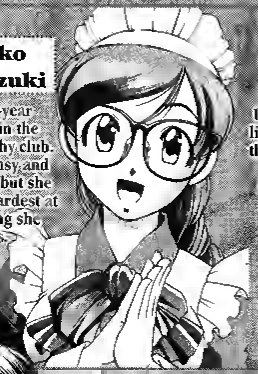
Summary of the story so far...

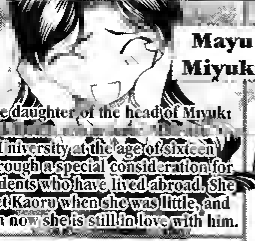


Taeko Minazuki

A third-year student in the photography club. She's clumsy and awkward, but she tries her hardest at everything she does.

A fourth-year student at Meiritsu University. She, like Kaoru, is in the photography club. An American who was raised in Hakata

Tina Foster



Mayu Miyuki

The daughter of the head of Miyuki University at the age of sixteen through a special consideration for students who have lived abroad. She met Kaoru when she was little, and even now she is still in love with him.

Chika Minazuki

Taeko's cousin a student in her first year of high school. An energetic girl who always has a tan. She's staying in the boarding house next to the Sakuraba manor

Natsuki Komiya

Chika's classmate and a fellow member of the swimming club. Always bright and energetic. Is under the misguided assumption that Kaoru is Chika's boyfriend

Chizuru Aizawa

Chika's classmate. She was invited by Chika to join the swimming club even though she can't swim. She has a gentle, quiet personality

Uzume (Ferret)

Was being raised by Tina, but has become attached to Miyabi for some reason

Kaoru Hanabishi

A graduate student at Meiritsu University. He was going to be the next head of the Hanabishi Zaibatsu, but now he's living in a boarding house next to one of the Sakuraba summer homes.

Aoi Sakuraba

Kaoru Hanabishi's betrothed. She is also the heir to the prestigious Sakuraba dry goods store (now Sakura Department Stores).

Miyabi Kagurazaki

Aoi's guardian from when she was young. She manages the lives of Aoi and Kaoru.

Kaoru Hanabishi was torn away from his mother when he was very young and raised as the heir of the Hanabishi Zaibatsu; however, he found he was unable to endure the harsh responsibilities placed on him, and ran away from home to live by himself. He continued life in this fashion until the arrival of Aoi Sakuraba, who had been his betrothed and who had loved him for eighteen years. Kaoru was blown away by her devotion, but her request for him to go back to the Hanabishi was the one thing he could not do. Aoi recognized the pain this caused Kaoru, so she decided to leave her own family, the Sakuraba, instead. Rather than lose her daughter, Aoi's mother conceded to allow the two of them to live together.

The couple moved into a western-style house that had previously been one of the Sakuraba family's summer homes, and they now share the estate with Aoi's guardian, Miyabi Kagurazaki. There is a catch, though—while Aoi and Miyabi live in the main house, Kaoru has to live in the boarding house adjacent to it.

Shortly after, Tina Foster and Taeko Minazuki, members of Kaoru's photography club, moved into the boarding house, too. To avoid creating scandal for the Sakuraba family, Aoi must keep up the pretense that she is Kaoru's landlady, rather than his fiancée.

Some time has passed since the charade began. Mayu Miyaki has returned from England, and Taeko's cousin, Chika Minazuki, has joined the group of friends. Ironically, the more women that gather around Kaoru, the deeper his and Aoi's feelings for each other become.

藍より青し 15

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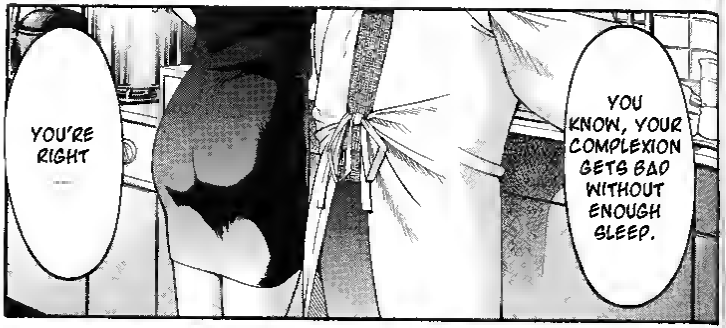
SIGH


YOU'RE RIGHT
YOU KNOW, YOUR COMPLEXION GETS BAD WITHOUT ENOUGH SLEEP.

I SEE YOU'RE MAKING TINA-SAN'S FAVORITE FOODS FOR DINNER AGAIN.

YES... EVEN THOUGH TINA-SAN ASKED ME NOT TO FUSS OVER HER, I CAN'T HELP IT

GOOD MORNING, MIYABI-SAN.
GOOD MORNING, AOI-SAMA
HAS EVERY-ONE ALREADY ..?
YES, THEY'VE ALL GONE OFF TO SCHOOL.
Y-YES. I HAVE A LOT OF SAKURABA PAPERS TO SORT THROUGH...
MIYABI-SAN, YOU DIDN'T STAY UP ALL NIGHT AGAIN, DID YOU?

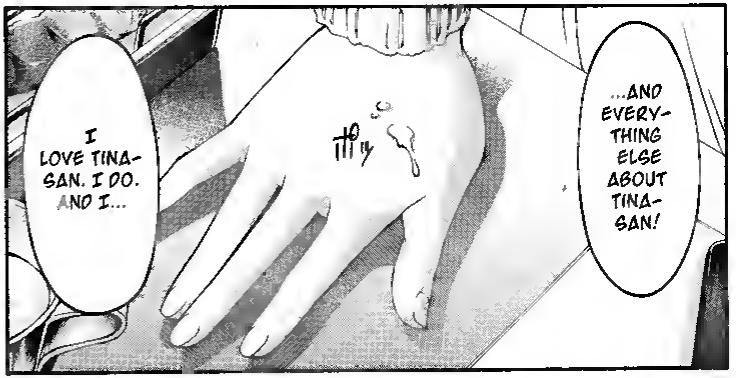
AOI-SAMA

HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED?

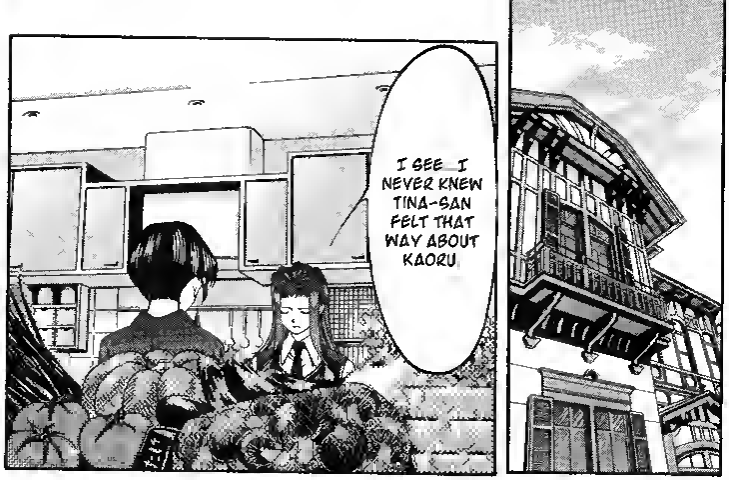
WHEN I THINK HOW WE WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE TINA-SAN'S SMILING FACE ANYMORE, I JUST...

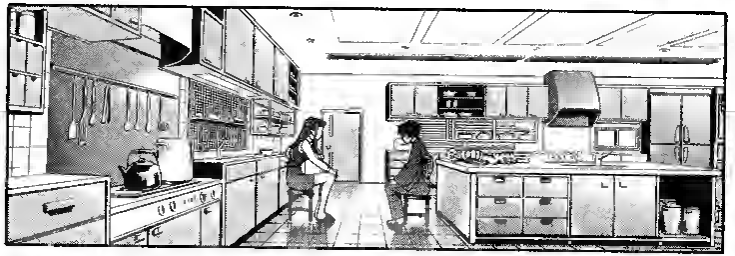
I'M POSITIVELY HOPELESS

I'VE ALWAYS LIKED...
sniffle
...HER SMILE

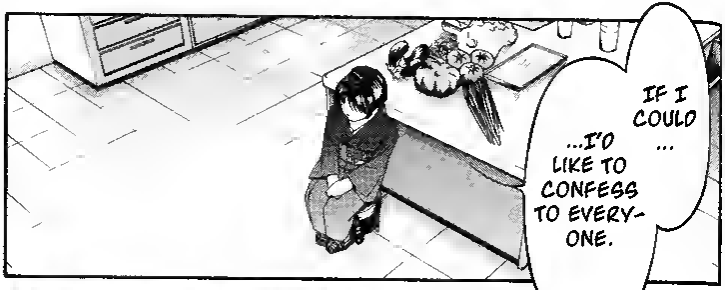

I LOVE TINA-SAN. I DO. AND I...
...AND EVERY-THING ELSE ABOUT TINA-SAN!

MIYABI-SAN!!


I SEE...I NEVER KNEW TINA-SAN FELT THAT WAY ABOUT KAORU.



I...
I TOLD TINA-SAN ABOUT HOW I FEEL, ALSO.

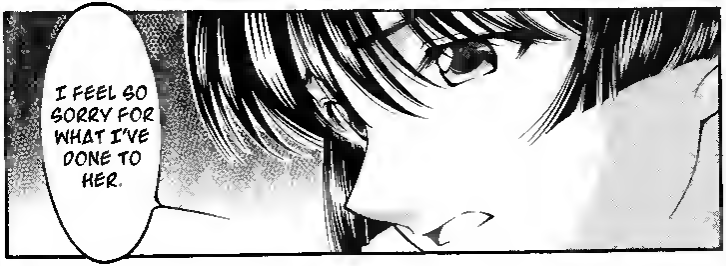

IF I COULD ...
...I'D LIKE TO CONFESS TO EVERY-ONE.

I'VE BEEN LIVING WITH THIS SECRET SO LONG...
...IT'S BEGUN TO PAIN ME.

ABOUT HOW I'M KAORU-SAMA'S BETROTHED ...
... AND ABOUT HOW MUCH I LOVE HIM.

IT SEEMS EVEN MORE SELFISH WHEN I REALIZE I MIGHT HAVE HURT TINA-SAN BY HIDING THE TRUTH.

IF I COULD TELL MY FEELINGS TO ANY-ONE, AT ANY TIME ...


I FEEL SO SORRY FOR WHAT I'VE DONE TO HER.

I DON'T WANT TO HIDE MY LOVE ANYMORE.

OH... AOI-SAMA ...

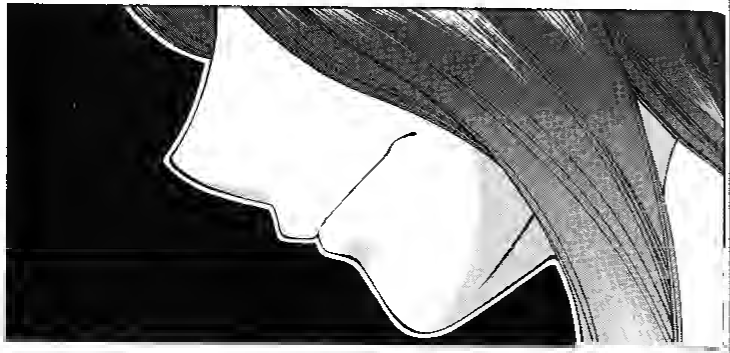
...I COULD FINALLY BE HAPPY.

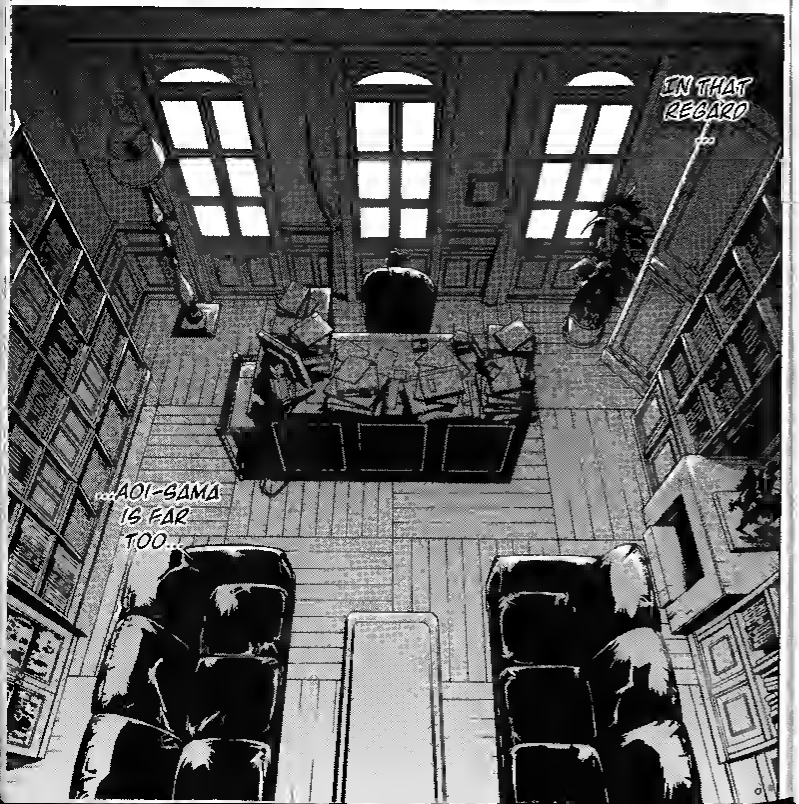
EVEN WITH HOW THINGS ARE, I'M MUCH HAPPIER THAN I WAS DURING ALL THOSE YEARS I COULON'T SEE HIM.
SO, REALLY, I'M ALL RIGHT.
EVERY-THING'S ALL RIGHT.

I KNOW. I COULD NEVER TELL.
AT LEAST THIS WAY, I CAN STAY BY KAORU-SAMA'S SIDE
BESIDES, IF I SUDDENLY STARTED BLABBING, IT WOULD CAUSE YOU PROBLEMS, MIYABI-SAN.

IN SOME RESPECTS, AOI-SAMA HASN'T CHANGED A BIT SINCE SHE WAS A LITTLE GIRL
SHE'S MOST INSISTENT IN EXPRESSING HER "GOOD MOOD" WHEN SHE HURTS THE WORST...

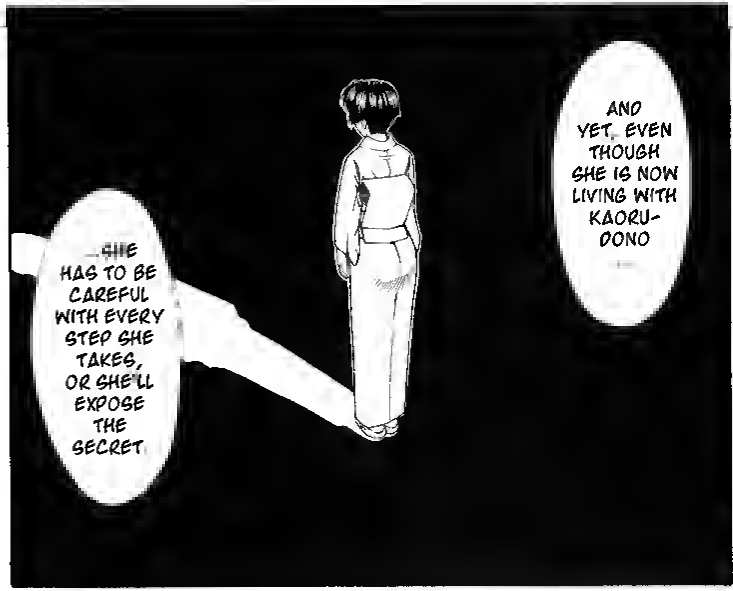
I'M ...ALL RIGHT.
I'M ALL RIGHT.
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I HEARD THE SAME FALSE SENTIMENT?
I'M ALL RIGHT.

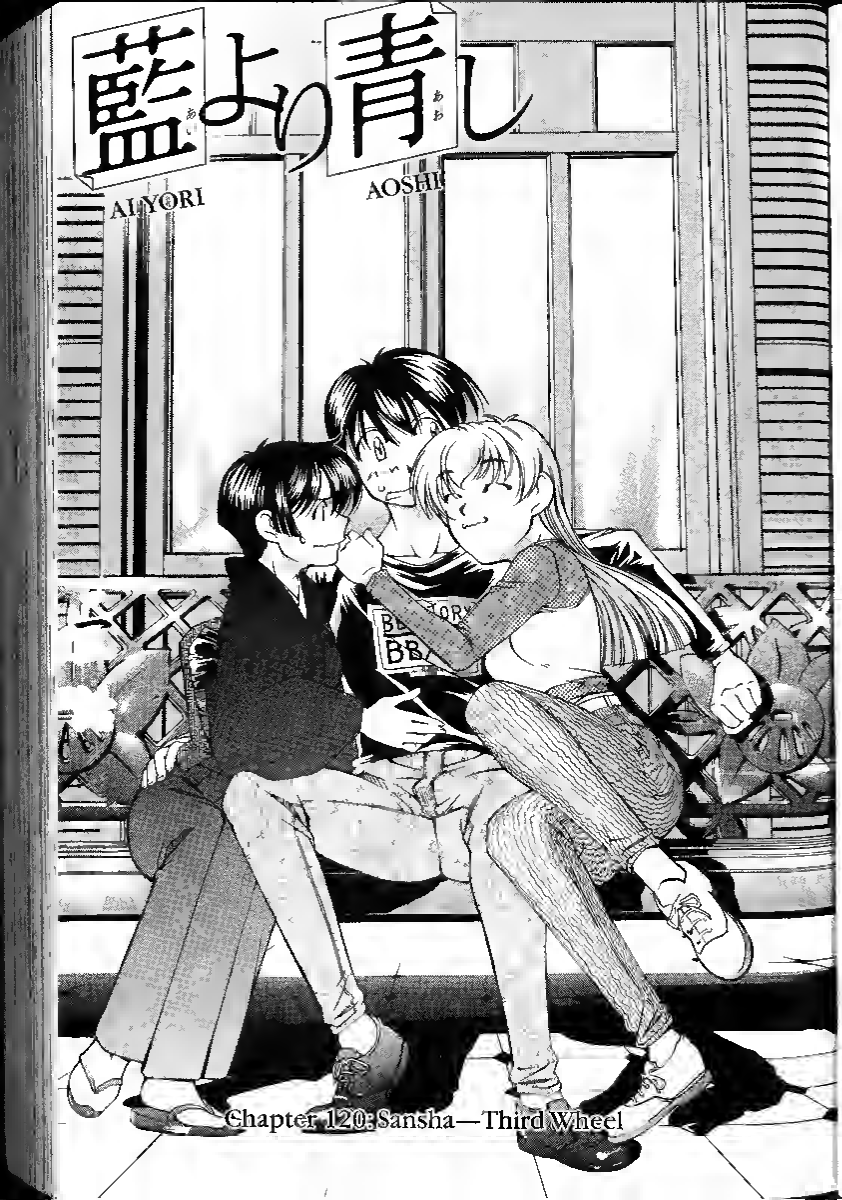



IN THAT REGARD...
...AOI-SAMA IS FAR TOO...

I'VE GIVEN UP A LOT, TOO, DONE A LOT OF WORK
...TO AVOID DISGRACING THE SAKURABA NAME SO SHE COULD MARRY HER BELOVED WITH HER HEAD HELD HIGH

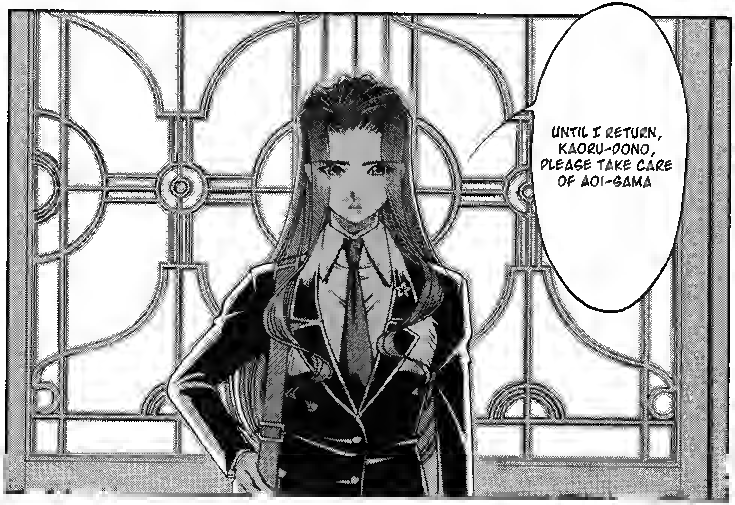
AOI-SAMA HAS SACRIFICED SO MUCH WAITING FOR THE TIME TO BE RIGHT TO MARRY KAORU-DONO

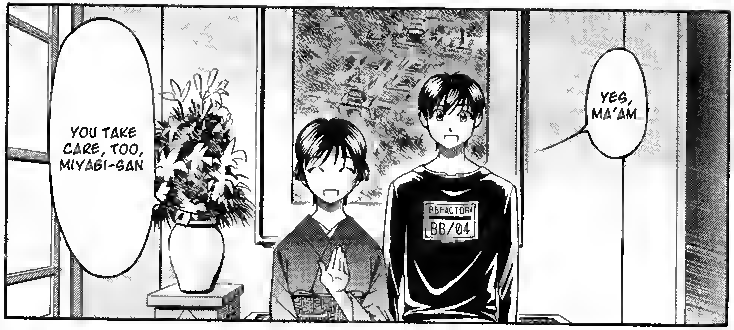

AND YET, EVEN THOUGH SHE IS NOW LIVING WITH KAORU-DONO
SHE HAS TO BE CAREFUL WITH EVERY STEP SHE TAKES, OR SHE'LL EXPOSE THE SECRET

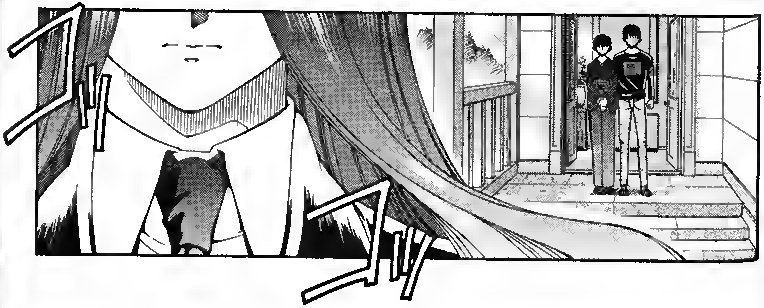


Chapter 120: Sansha—Third Wheel

End of Chapter 119: Daijoubu—I'm All Right

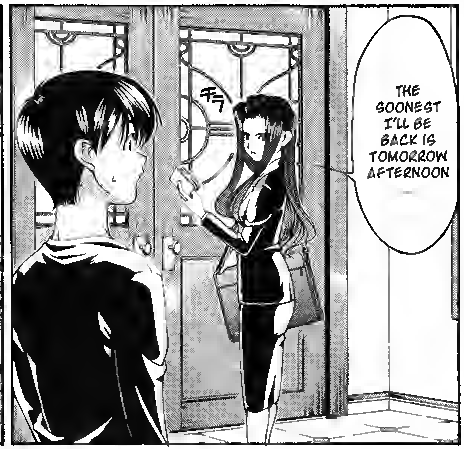

UNTIL I RETURN, KAORU-DONO, PLEASE TAKE CARE OF AOI-SAMA


YES, MA'AM.
YOU TAKE CARE, TOO, MIYABI-SAN
FACTORY 86/04

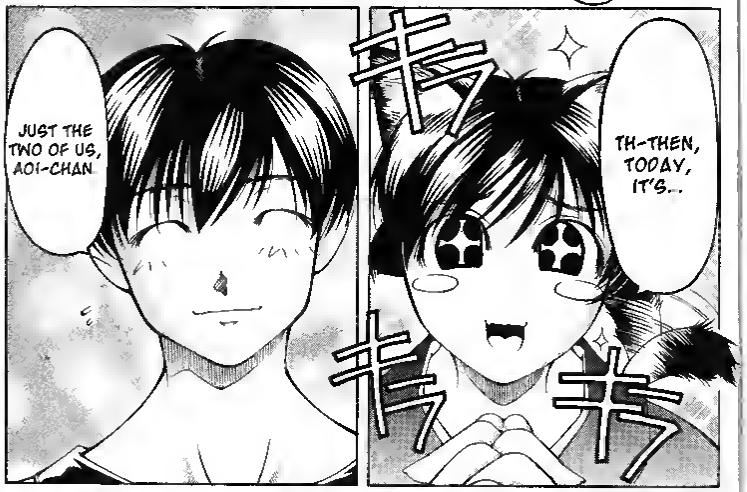


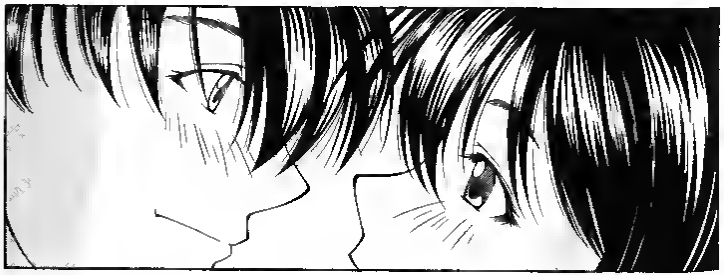
WELL THEN, AOI-SAMA, I'M HEADING OUT TO A SAKURABA MEETING.

IT WILL PROBABLY TAKE LONGER THAN THAT
BUT I DOUBT IT.

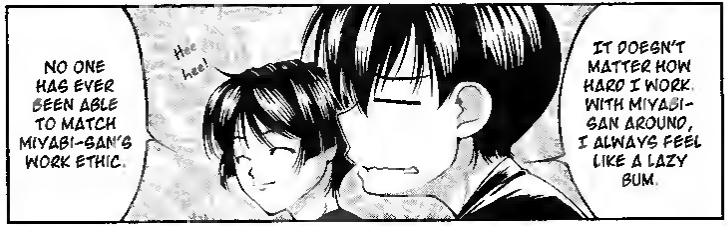

THE SOONEST I'LL BE BACK IS TOMORROW AFTERNOON

YEAH. MY CLASS WAS CANCELLED
spin
クル
BY THE WAY --
DO YOU HAVE TODAY OFF, KAORU-SAMA?


JUST THE TWO OF US, AOI-CHAN.
TH-THEN, TODAY, IT'S...



JUST WHEN WE THOUGHT SHE'D ORGANIZED ALL THE PAPERS AND COULD TAKE A REST, SHE GETS CALLED IN FOR SOME MEETING


NO ONE HAS EVER BEEN ABLE TO MATCH MIYABI-SAN'S WORK ETHIC.
Hee hee!
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW HARD I WORK. WITH MIYABI-SAN AROUND, I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE A LAZY BUM.

SHE'S A CONSTANT REMINDER OF HOW MUCH FARTHER I HAVE TO GO.

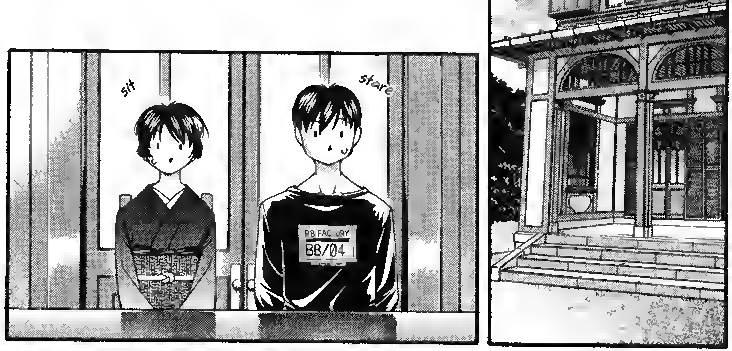
gulp
gulp
AH-HA. SO, YOU TWO HAVE BEEN SECRETLY MAKING OUT ALL MORNING, HAVEN'T YOU?
W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, TINA?
W-W-WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING LIKE THAT YET.
YET?!
SO, YOU WERE ABOUT TO!

Ba-bum
Ba-bum
G' MORNING !!
OH, Y-YOU'RE STILL HERE, TINA...?
G-GOOD MORNING

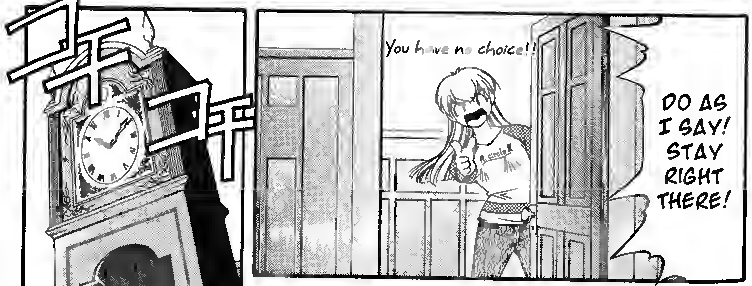
UH.. UM...
あ
あ
あ
fidget
I DIDN'T MEAN.. THAT IS...
fidget fidget
YOU GUYS SHOULDN'T WORRY SO MUCH ABOUT ME.
YOU KNOW HOW I HATE TO BE FUSSED OVER.
SETTLE DOWN, YOU TWO. I WAS JUST TEASING.

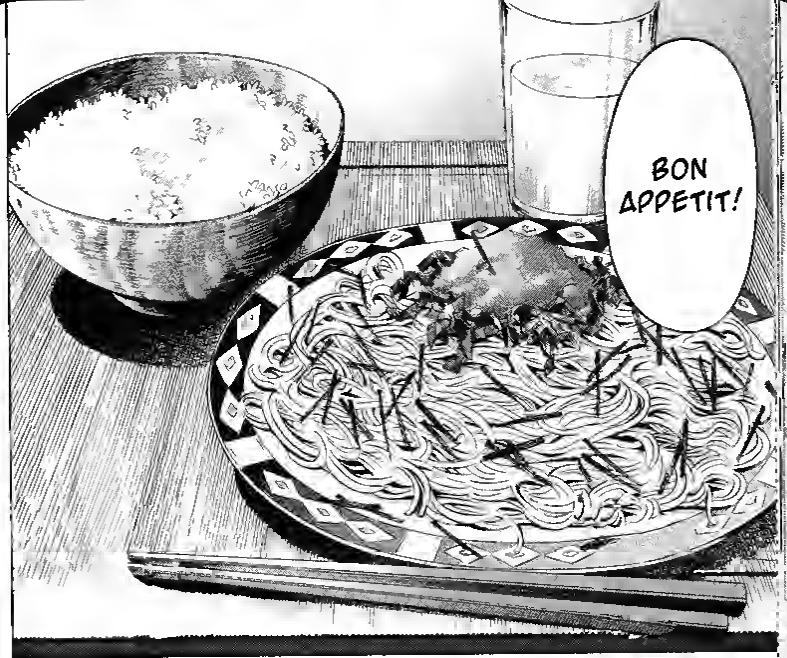
S suck face?
I ALMOST FORGOT ...!
NO, WELL, YOU HAVE IT ALL WRONG, WE...
FEEL FREE TO SUCK FACE LIKE I WASN'T EVEN HERE!!
OWW!
Awkward
OH, AND I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A REPORT.
UM...I'M GOING TO GET BREAKFAST READY!

HEY !!
sneak
こそ
sneak
こそこそ
sneak
T-TINA-SAN, THAT HURTS!!
OW, OW, OW! C'MON, TINA!
yank
tug

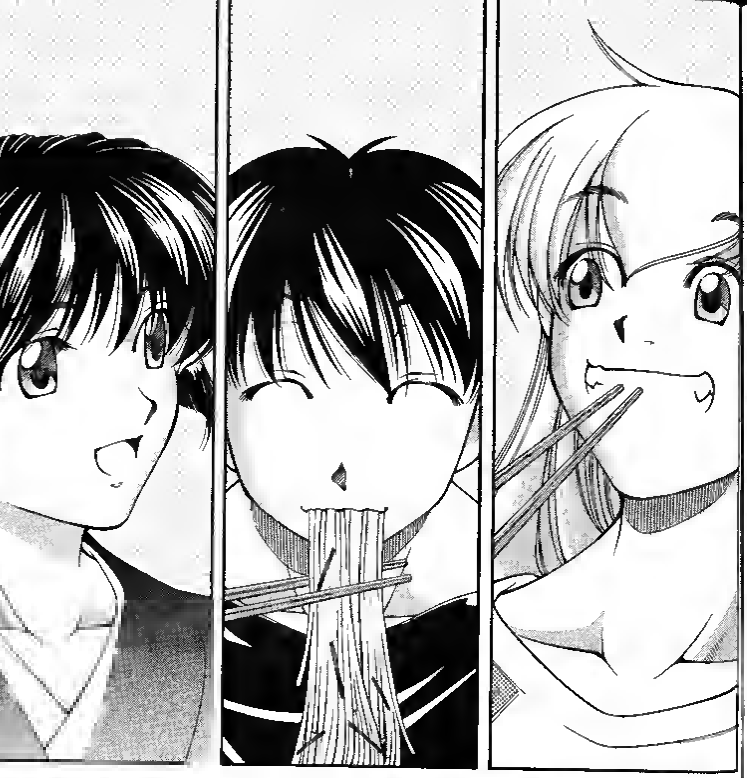

sit
stare
BB/04

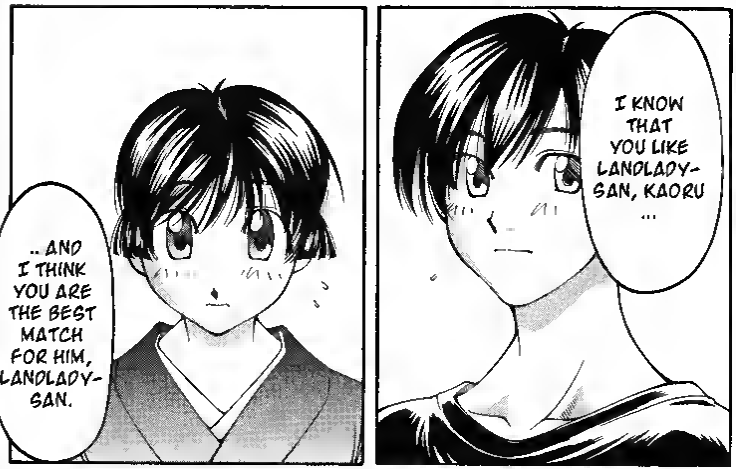
EH?!
TODAY I'M GOING TO MAKE YOUR BREAKFAST
YOU TWO WAIT HERE

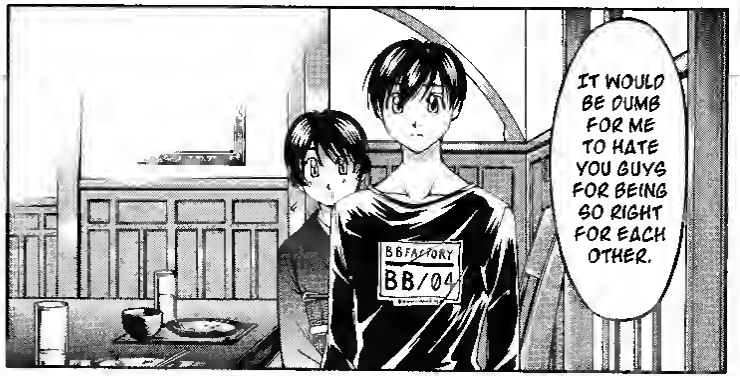

コチコチ
You have no choice!!
DO AS I SAY! STAY RIGHT THERE!

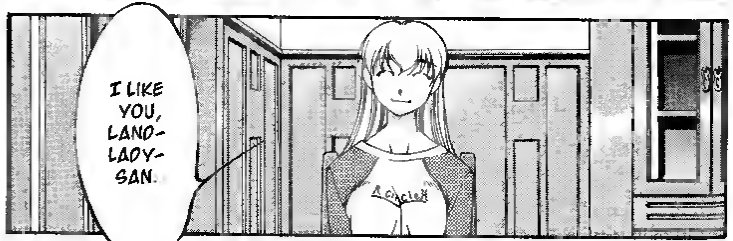


*SALTED POLLACK OR COD ROE SPICED WITH RED PEPPER



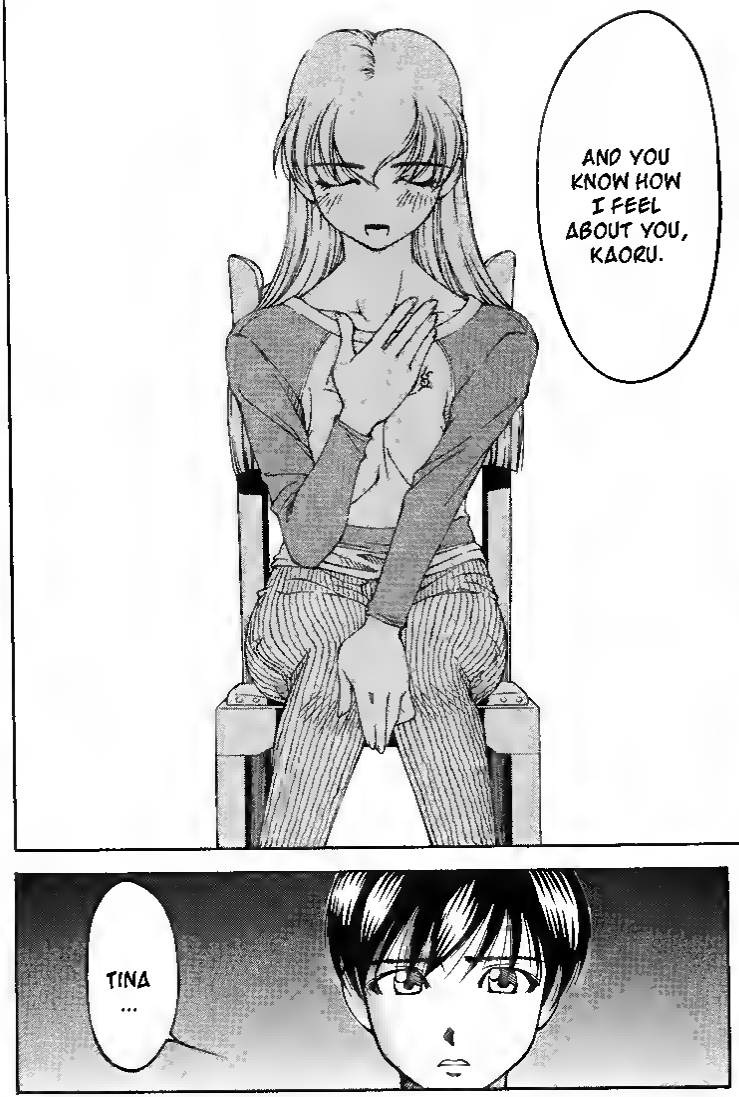

I KNOW THAT YOU LIKE LANDLADY-SAN, KAORU ...
.. AND I THINK YOU ARE THE BEST MATCH FOR HIM, LANDLADY-SAN.

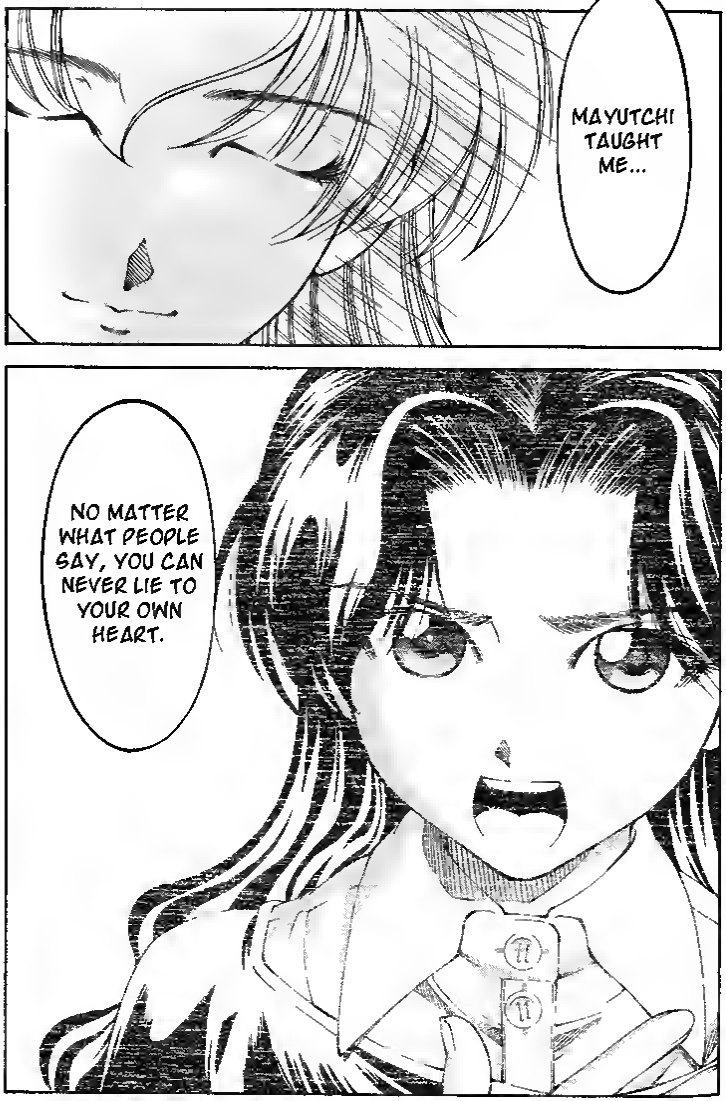

IT WOULD BE DUMB FOR ME TO HATE YOU GUYS FOR BEING SO RIGHT FOR EACH OTHER.
BB FACTORY
BB/04

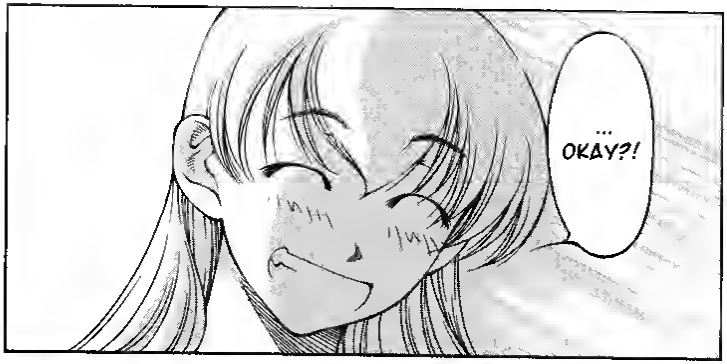

I LIKE YOU, LAND-LADY-SAN.

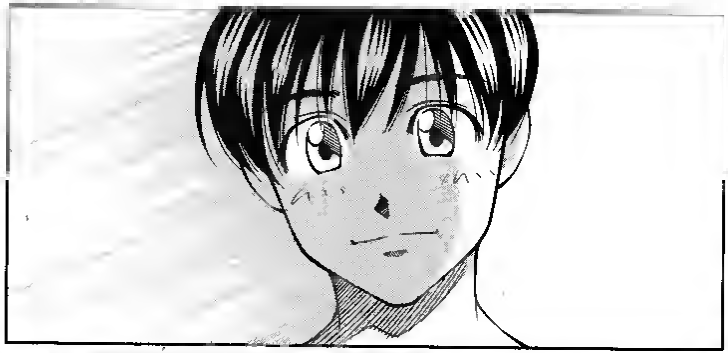
I KNOW I ALREADY TOLD YOU, BUT DON'T FUSS OVER ME.

I PLAN ON ACTING THE SAME AS I ALWAYS HAVE.


AND YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU, KAORU.
TINA ...


MAYUTCHI TAUGHT ME...
NO MATTER WHAT PEOPLE SAY, YOU CAN NEVER LIE TO YOUR OWN HEART.


...
OKAY?!

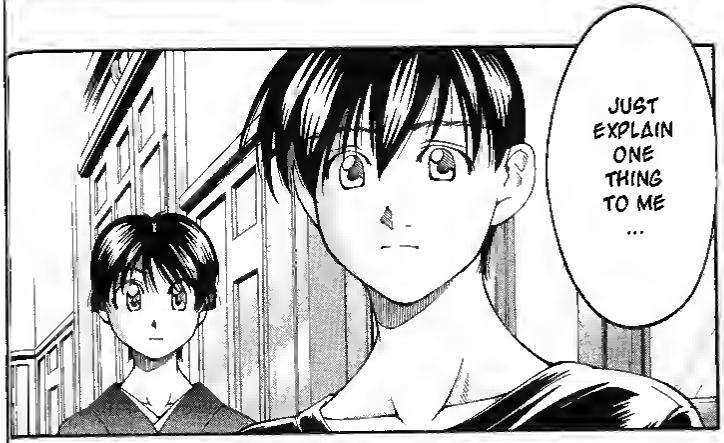


SO, LET'S CARRY ON LIKE EVERYTHING'S THE SAME AS ALWAYS...
BB FACTORY
BB/04

藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI

Chapter 12 Kokuhaku—Confession

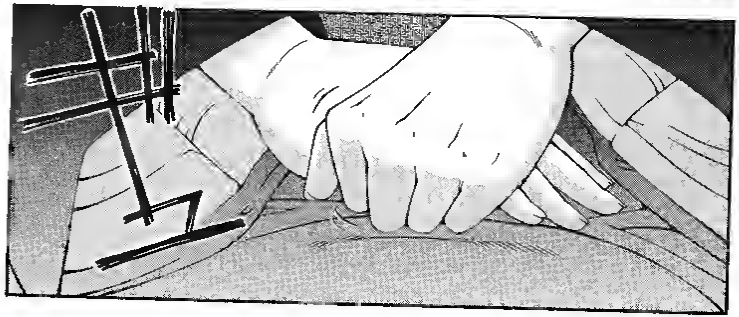


End of Chapter 120 Sansha—Third Wheel

I'D REALLY LIKE TO KNOW.

IS THERE A REASON YOU HAVEN'T TOLD YOUR FRIENDS?

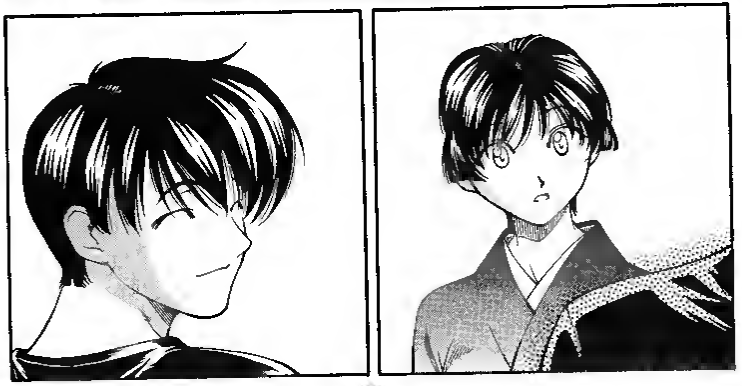
B-BECAUSE ...WELL, THAT IS...

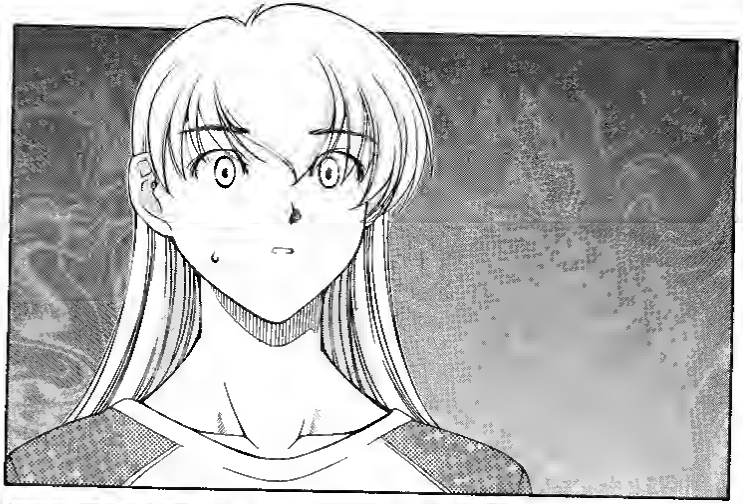


B-
BETROTHED?!
R. Circle

AOI-CHAN AND I HAVE BEEN BETROTHED SINCE WE WERE LITTLE KIDS

ACTUALLY, AOI-CHAN IS...
BB

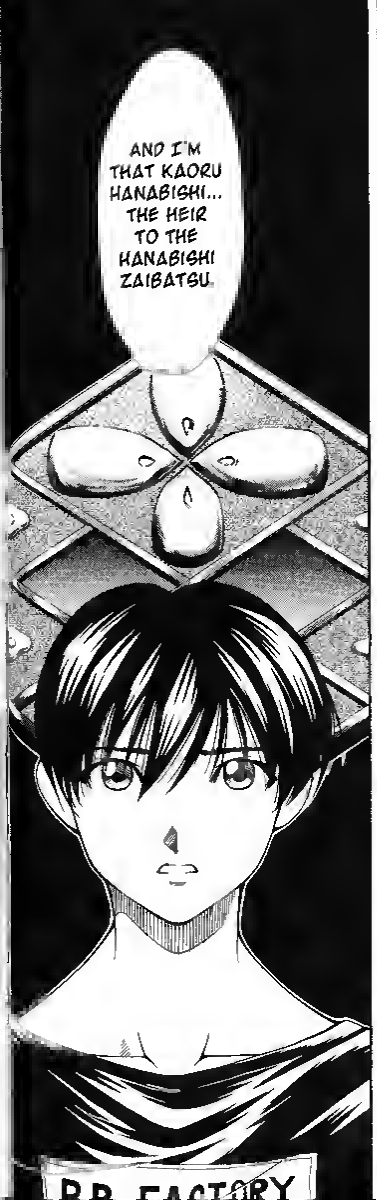




WE MET WHEN WE WERE LITTLE, BUT THEN WE SPENT YEARS APART.

EXCEPT SINCE I RAN AWAY FROM HOME, I'M THE FORMER HEIR INSTEAD.

AFTER I LEFT HOME, AOI TRACKED ME DOWN...


AND I'M THAT KAORU HANABISHI... THE HEIR TO THE HANABISHI ZAIBATSU.

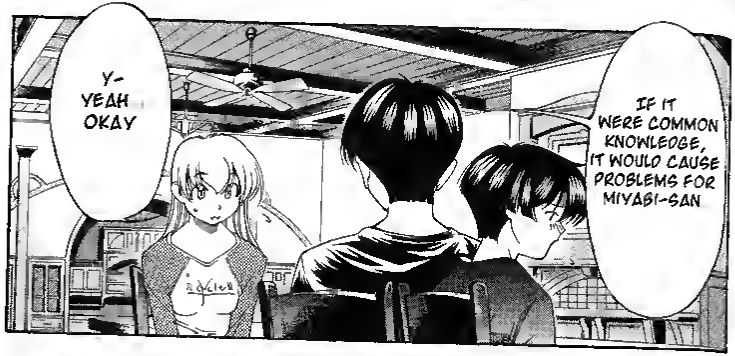
...THE ONLY DAUGHTER OF THE SAKURABA FAMILY, THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PRESTIGIOUS SAKURA DEPARTMENT STORE. SHE'S THAT AOI SAKURABA.

W-
WAIT A
SECOND!!
I'M HAVING A HARD TIME WRAPPING MY HEAD AROUND YOU BEING FRIENDS AS KIDS AND ZAIBATSU AND STUFF
I NEED TO PROCESS THIS
O Okay
process
process
process
process
diii 千 ——— ン iing
Y-YES ...
IF YOU WERE BETROTHED, THAT MEANS YOUR PARENTS DECIDED WITHOUT ASKING YOU, RIGHT?
UM, I-NOUE-SAN...?

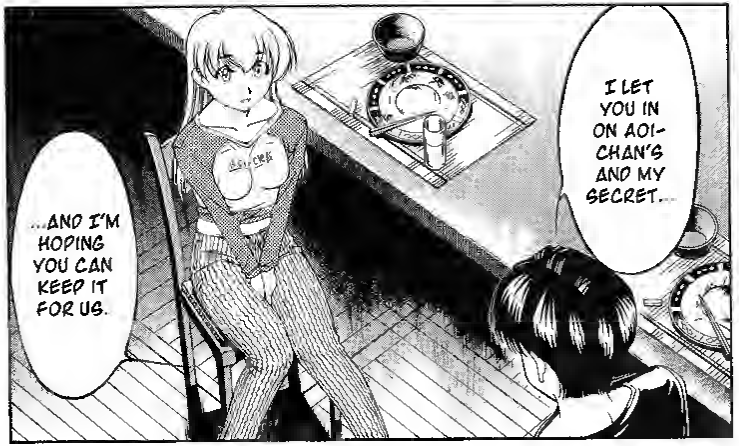
YES.
AND YOU WERE JUST A LITTLE GIRL?
NOD
AND AFTER THAT, YOU DIDN'T SEE KAORU FOR A LONG, LOOOOONG TIME...RIGHT?
WERE INTERESTED ENOUGH IN KAORU TO FIND HIM?
AND YOU STILL ...

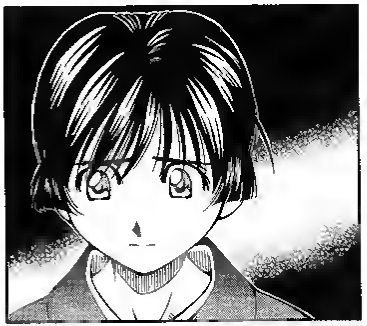
I COULD NEVER WIN.
I GUESS IT MAKES SENSE I WAS THINKING ABOUT KAORU THAT WHOLE YEAR I WAS TRAVELING
はぁ
SIGH
I CAN'T MEASURE UP TO THE LOVE OF LANDLADY-SAN

W-WELL...
I JUST LOVED HIM SO MUCH THAT I COULDN'T HELP IT.
カリ
SCRATCH


Y-
YEAH
OKAY
IF IT WERE COMMON KNOWLEDGE, IT WOULD CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR MIYABI-SAN

TINA
...


I LET YOU IN ON AOI-CHAN'S AND MY SECRET...
...AND I'M HOPING YOU CAN KEEP IT FOR US.



SORRY WE TOOK SO LONG!
CHIKA IS HERE TO HELP--!!

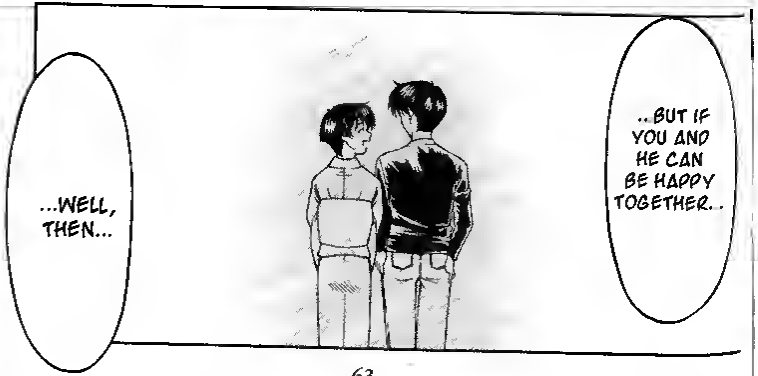
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU DOING, TINA-SENPAI?
LANDLADY-SAN IS TEACHING ME TO COOK SO I CAN LEND A HAND WITH DINNER
REALLY --?!
AOI'S AMAZING I WATCH HER EVERY DAY, BUT I CAN NEVER MEASURE UP

TAE-CHIIIIN, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO DO THE BEST OUR NO-GOOD SELVES CAN MUSTER--
Waaah!
Ehhh? No good?
OHHH, TINA-SAN, PLEASE DON'T SAY SUCH THINGS!
LANDLADY-SAN!
YES?

YOU HAVE TO DO YOUR BEST TO BE HAPPY.

TINA-SAN...

LIKE I SAID BEFORE, I HAVEN'T COMPLETELY GIVEN UP ON KAORU...


...WELL, THEN...
..BUT IF YOU AND HE CAN BE HAPPY TOGETHER..

SO... YOU'D BETTER MAKE THE MOST OF THIS.

sniffle
I'M ROOTING FOR YOU.
OH, TINA-SAN!

...I THINK I COULD FINALLY LET GO OF THE FEELINGS I'M CARRYING INSIDE OF ME.

藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI

Chapter 122: Kyuukoku—Urgent Notice

End of Chapter 121: Kokuhaku—Confession

...

WHA--
!?!

rrrring
rrrring
rrrring
HUH? HEY, AOI-NEECHAN, I THINK THE PHONE'S RINGING

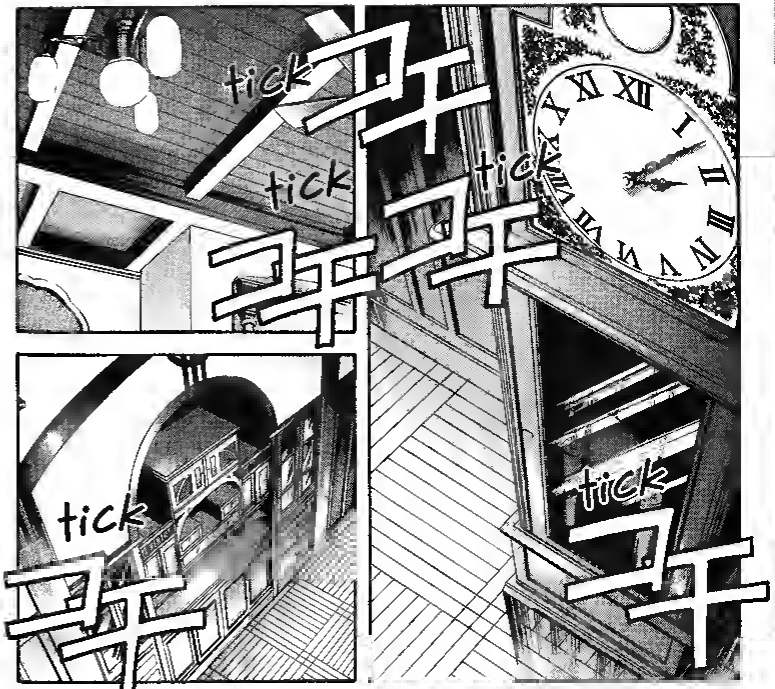
SAKU-RABA RESI-DENCE.

AH, YES!

SHE LEFT A WHILE AGO TO ANSWER THE PHONE.
WHERE'S AOI-CHAN?
O-OKAY
YOU'D BETTER EAT LOTS OF IT!
YES, I UNDERSTAND
Y-YES
HUH?
TINA, YOU'RE MAKING DINNER?
YO, KAORU!
LOOKIT! IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE MADE MEAT AND POTATO STEW!

EARLIER TODAY, MY FATHER... HE COLLAPSED!

AOI-CHAN?!
E--
ARE YOU OKAY?! WHAT'S WRONG, AOI-CHAN?

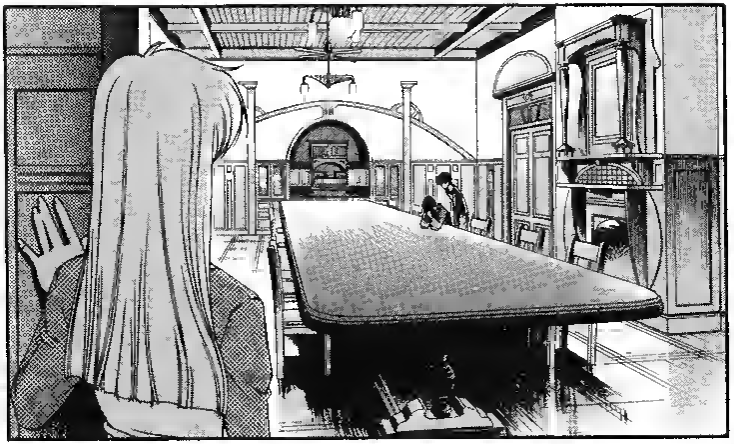

tick
tick
tick
tick
tick

YES?
AOI-CHAN...
...O-OKAY.
YOU SHOULD GET SOME REST...

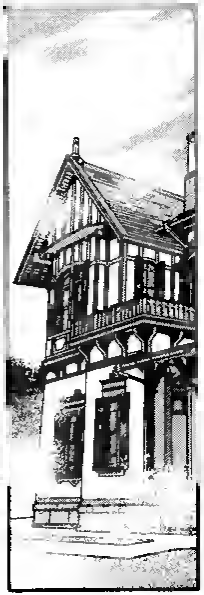
HOW'S KAORU-SAN DOING? IS SHE OKAY?
UH... I GUESS. I MEAN, SHE HASN'T GOTTEN WORSE
HOW IS HER FATHER DOING?
I DON'T REALLY KNOW. ALL SHE SAID WAS HE COLLAPSED
I THINK SOMEONE'S COMING TO PICK HER UP IN THE MORNING

THINGS LIKE THIS ARE SO HARD. I WISH THERE WAS SOMETHING WE COULD DO.
I... I KNOW
YOU SHOULD HIT THE HAY, TINA
WHAT ABOUT YOU, KAORU?
I'LL BE WITH AOI-CHAN
Y-YEAH. GOOD PLAN

I HAVE COME TO DRIVE YOU HOME, AOI-SAMA.
ding dong

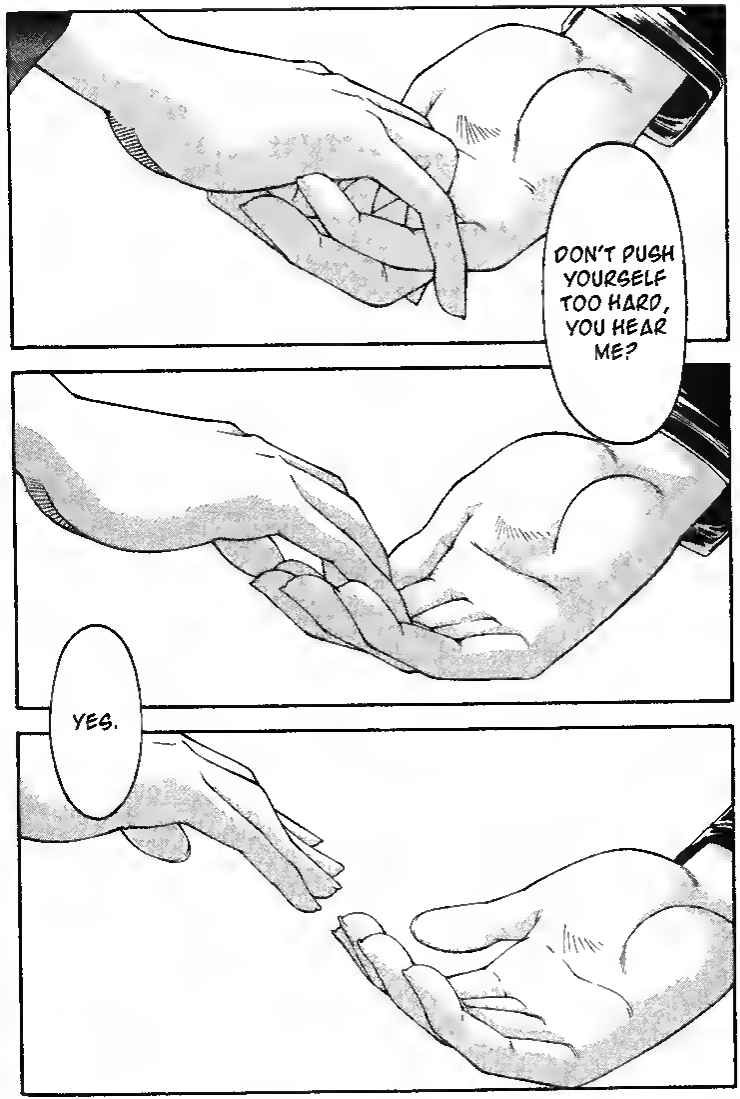


THANK YOU

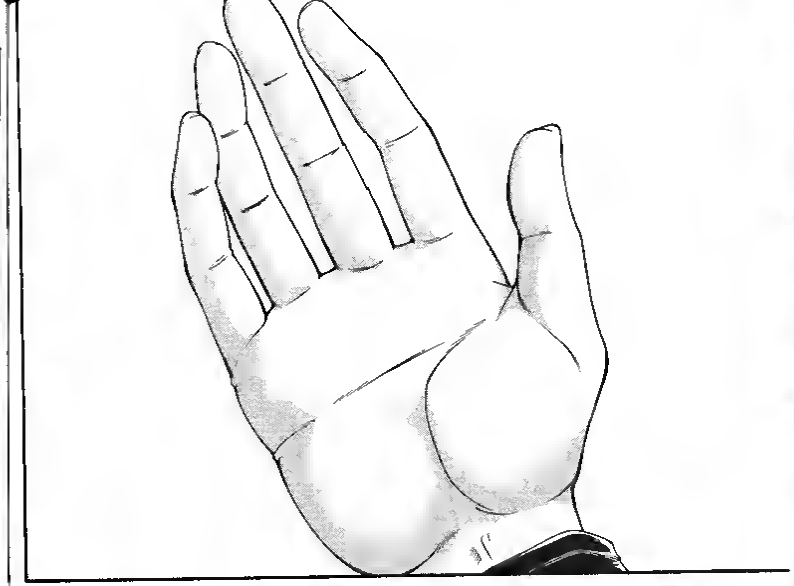


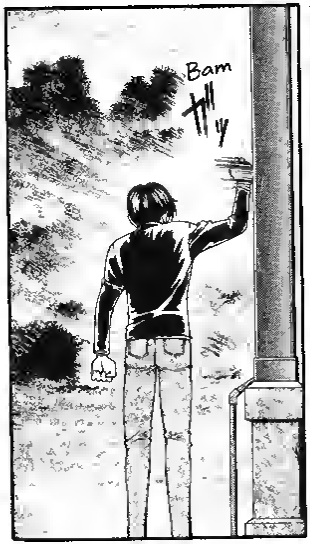
I'M VERY SORRY. I'VE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO DRIVE AOI-SAMA AND NO ONE ELSE. ALONE.
WAIT, AOI-CHAN, I'LL GO WITH YOU...

...I UNDERSTAND.
PSST
MY FAMILY STILL DOESN'T APPROVE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP.
PSST
PSST
PSST
I'M SORRY, KAORU-SAMA.
PSST
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
DON'T WORRY.


DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO HARD, YOU HEAR ME?
YES.

キキ
キン
B.B. FACTORY

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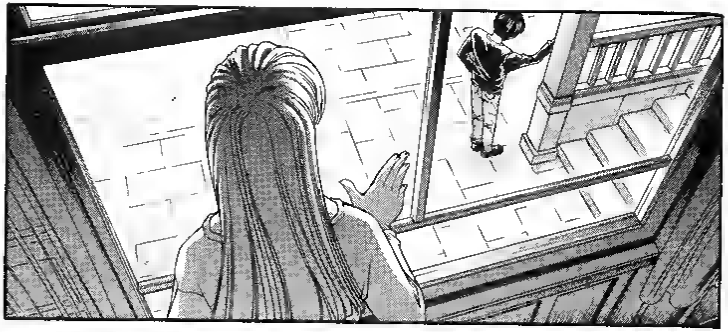
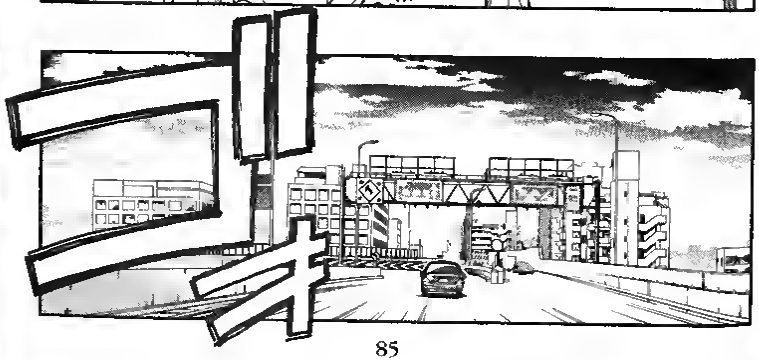
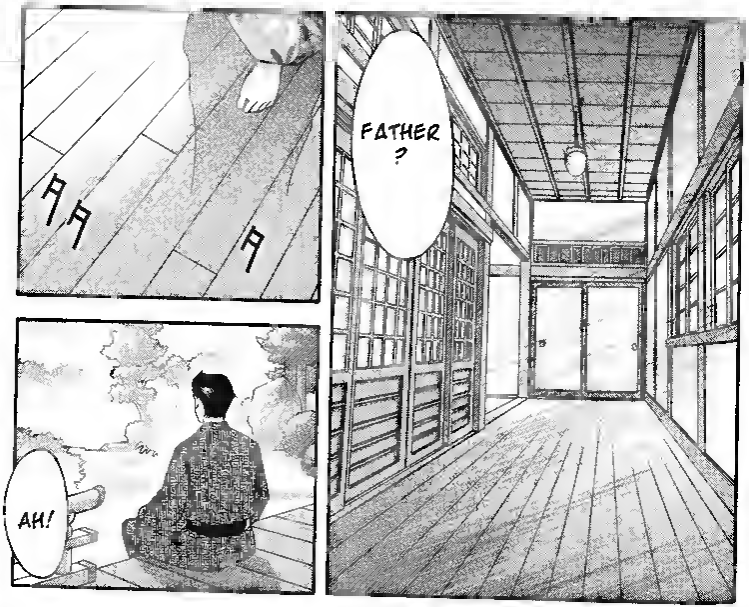
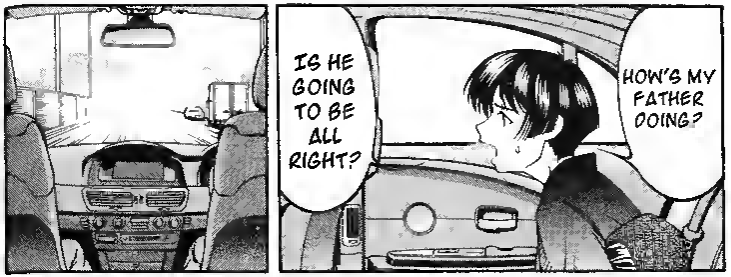


KAORU...
THE WHITE
LAKE



Chapter 123: Kaikou—Unexpected Meeting





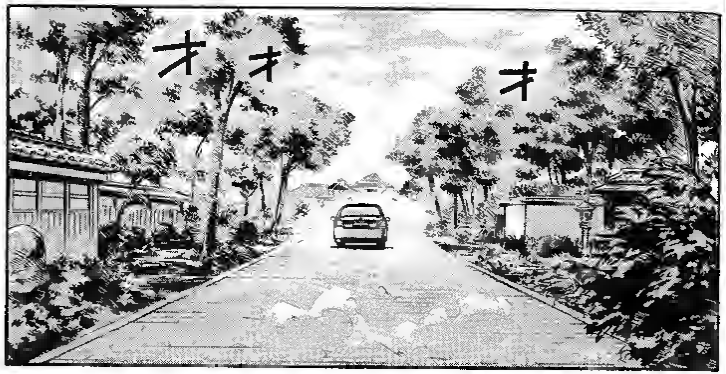
End of Chapter 122: Kyuukoku—Urgent Notice

FATHER

FATHER!!

AOI JUST LOVES HER DADDY'S STRONG BACK.

OH, AOI— WHAT IS IT NOW? YOU WON'T STOP UNTIL I'VE SPOILED YOU!
TEE HEE HEE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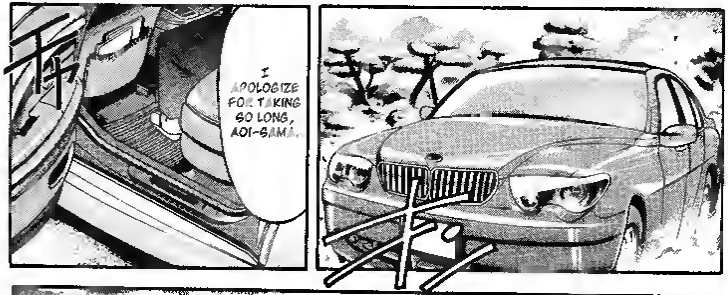
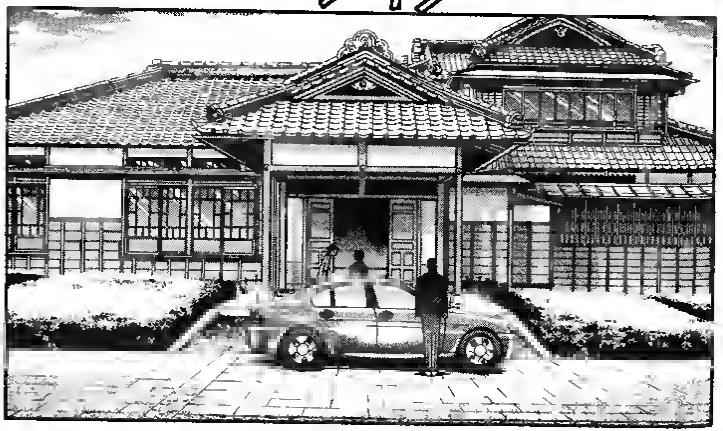
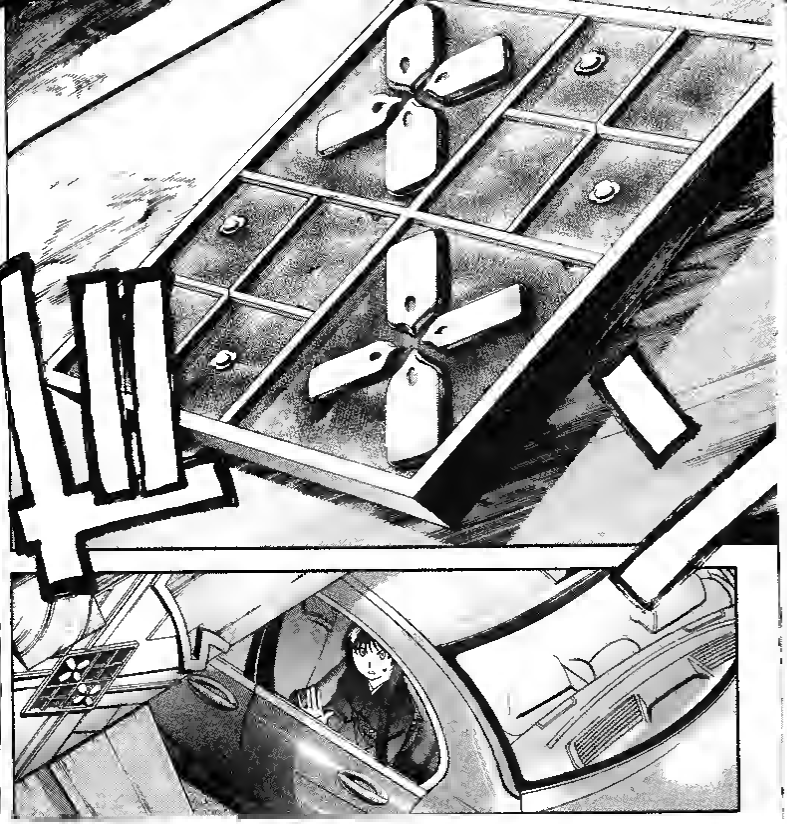
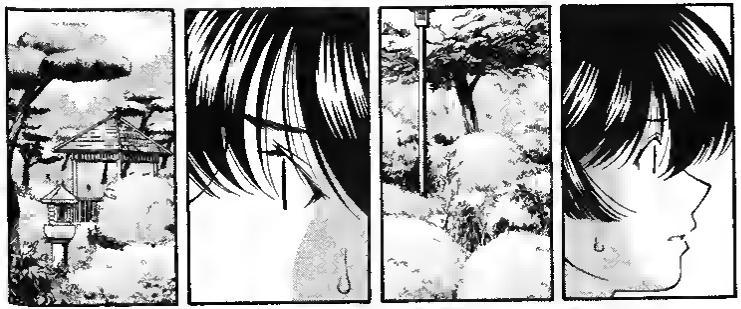
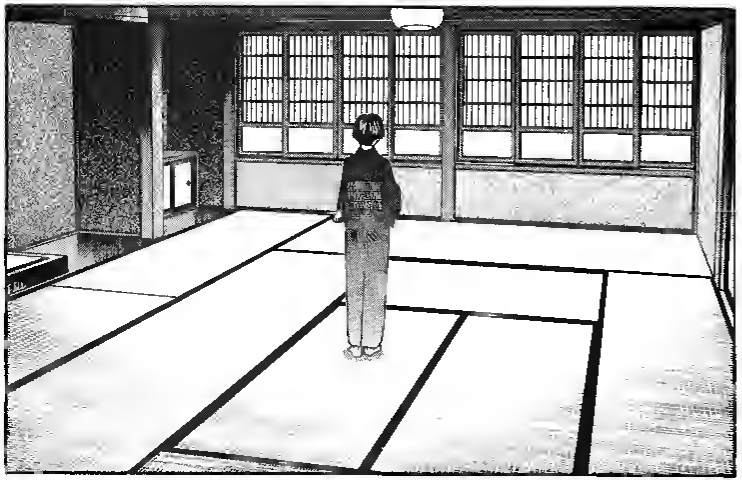

I APOLOGIZE FOR TAKING SO LONG, AOI-SAMA.





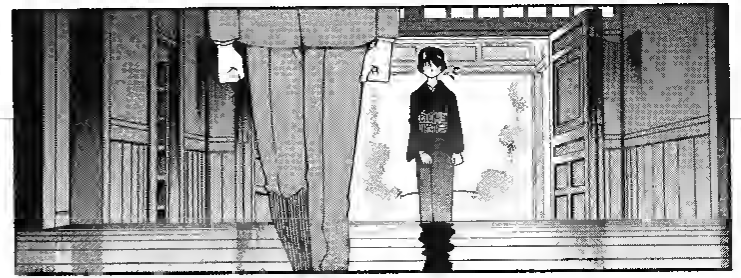




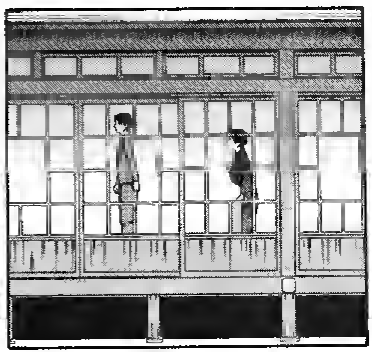
WHA--?!
ALL I KNOW IS I WAS TOLD TO BRING YOU HERE, AOI-SAMA
I'M VERY SORRY.

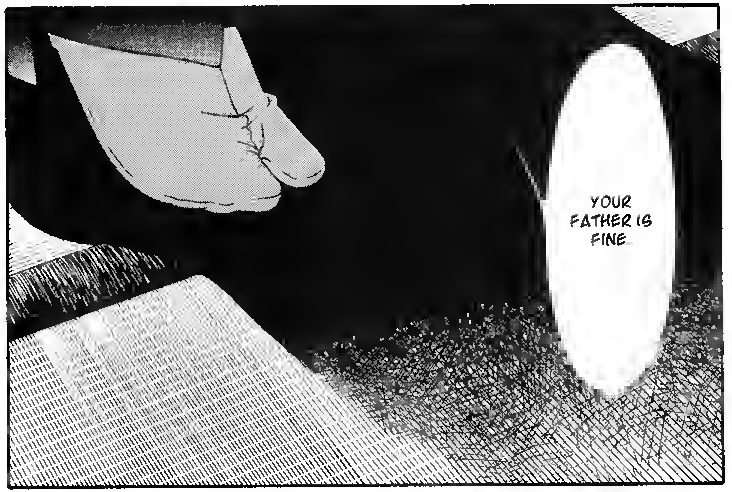
TELL ME ABOUT MY FATHER! PLEASE, YOU MUST ANSWER ME!

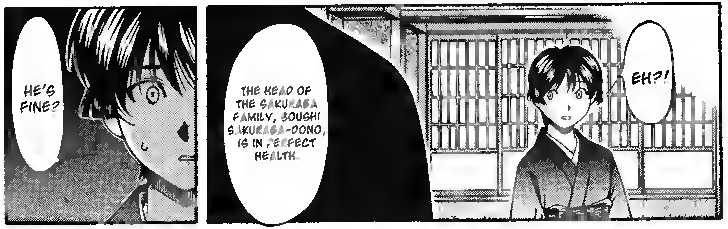
WHAT'S GOING ON? THIS ISN'T THE SAKURABA ESTATE!



WHERE IS MY FATHER? I WANT TO SEE HIM! IS HE HERE?



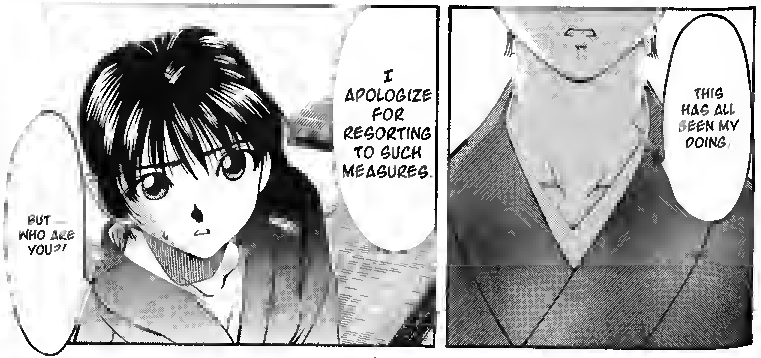

YOUR FATHER IS FINE.


HE'S FINE?
THE HEAD OF THE SAKURABA FAMILY, SOUGHI SAKURABA-DONO, IS IN PERFECT HEALTH.
EH?!

drop
SIGH...

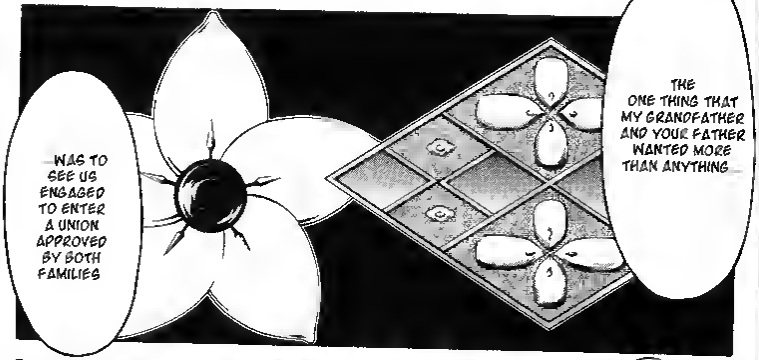
WHY WOULD YOU LIE TO ME ABOUT SOMETHING SO AWFUL?!

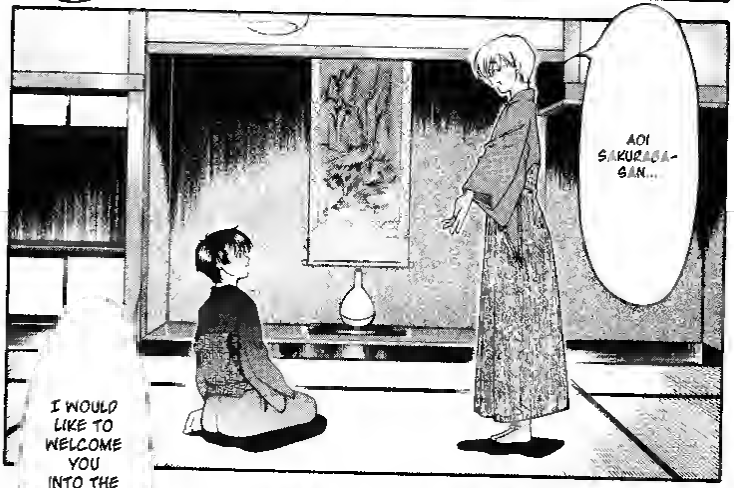
PLEASE, DON'T BLAME THE DRIVER.


BUT... WHO ARE YOU?!
I APOLOGIZE FOR RESORTING TO SUCH MEASURES.
THIS HAS ALL BEEN MY DOING.

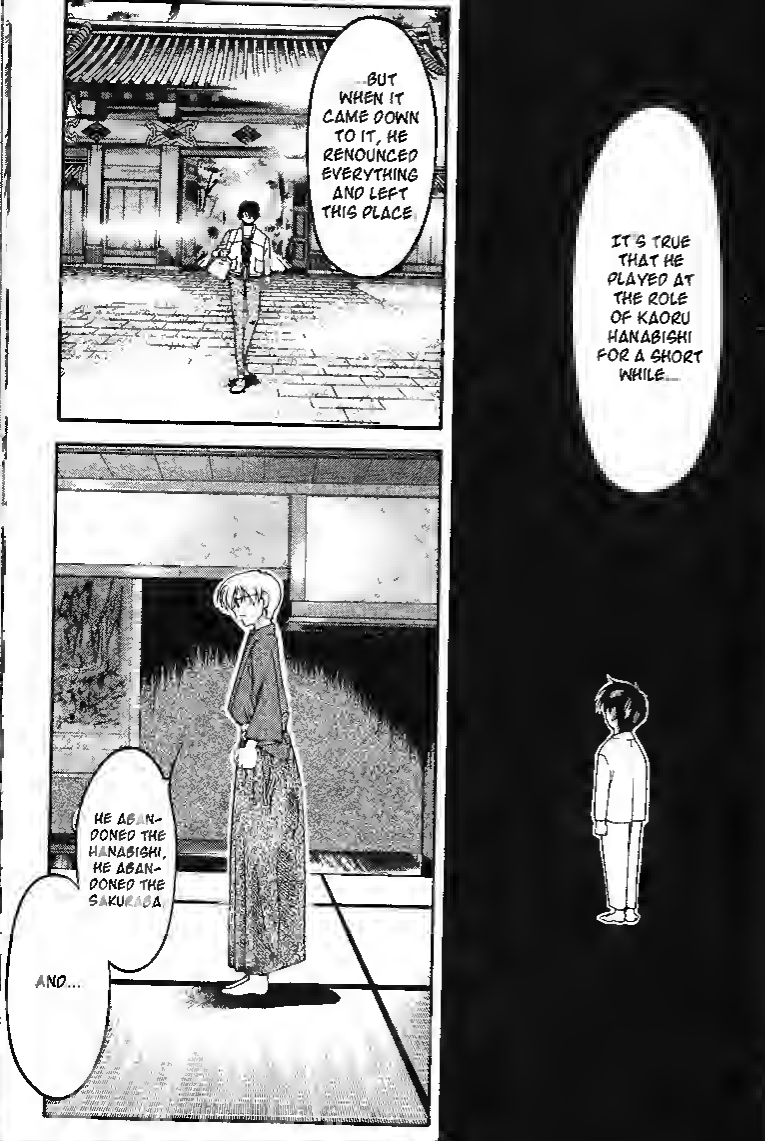
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF. I AM THE HEAD OF THE HANABISHI FAMILY...
...KAORU HANABISHI.

smile
EH ...?!
W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
MY GRANDFATHER PASSED AWAY A FEW DAYS AGO, AND I HAVE INHERITED THE FAMILY ESTATE
I SUPPOSE THIS MUST COME AS A REAL SHOCK.


THE ONE THING THAT MY GRANDFATHER AND YOUR FATHER WANTED MORE THAN ANYTHING...
...WAS TO SEE US ENGAGED TO ENTER A UNION APPROVED BY BOTH FAMILIES


AOI SAKURAGA-SAN...
I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME YOU INTO THE HANABISHI FAMILY.

I'M SORRY IT'S TOO MUCH INFORMATION COMING TOO FAST.
I'M SO SHOCKED, I DON'T THINK I COMPREHEND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.
YOU... YOU AREN'T THE KAORU-SAMA I KNOW.
DO YOU MEAN...
THAT OTHER BOY? HONJOU?
THE HONJOU FAMILY NO LONGER HAS ANY CONNECTION TO EITHER THE HANABISHI OR THE SAKURABA FAMILIES

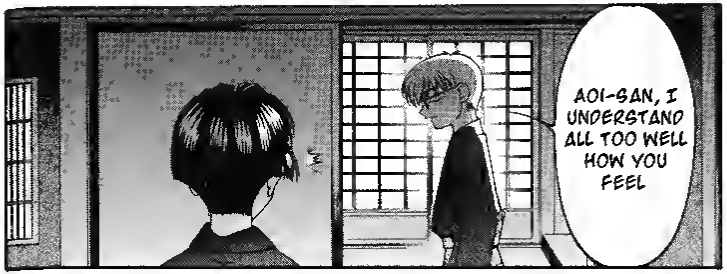

...BUT WHEN IT CAME DOWN TO IT, HE RENOUNCED EVERYTHING AND LEFT THIS PLACE
IT'S TRUE THAT HE PLAYED AT THE ROLE OF KAORU HANABISHI FOR A SHORT WHILE...
HE ABANDONED THE HANABISHI, HE ABANDONED THE SAKURABA
AND...

...WHEN HE LEFT, HE ABANDONED YOU, AS WELL, AOI-SAN.
THAT'S A FACT HE CAN NEVER ERASE FROM REALITY
KUH?!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!?!
I'M LIVING WITH KAORU-SAMA NOW, AND WE'RE VERY HAPPY!

KAORU-SAMA HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY BETROTHED
I NEVER STOPPED CARING ABOUT HIM, NEVER STOPPED DREAMING I WOULD MARRY KAORU-SAMA ONE DAY
NOTHING WILL EVER SEPARATE ME FROM MY BELOVED KAORU-SAMA
NOW, PLEASE EXCUSE ME...

EH?!

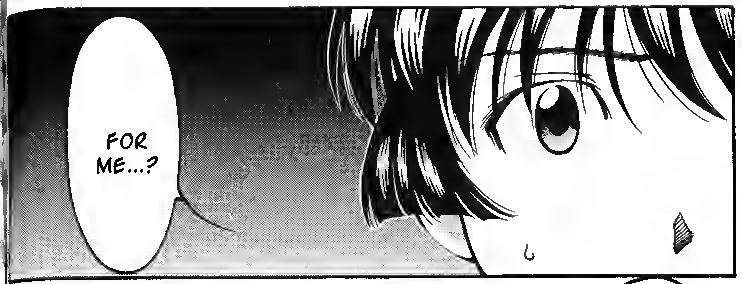
I BECAME THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SO YOU WOULD BE MINE
I ONLY CONTINUE BREATHING SO I MIGHT SOMEDAY MAKE YOU HAPPY.


AOI-SAN, I UNDERSTAND ALL TOO WELL HOW YOU FEEL

I...

I UNDERSTAND, BECAUSE YOU'RE THE ONLY REASON I EXIST.

Chapter 124: Fumie—Rebuke



End of Chapter 123: Kaikou—Unexpected Meeting

HE'S RIGHT! YOU CERTAINLY ARE A STUBBORN WOMAN, AOI-SAN.
YOUR FATHER TRIED TO WARN ME.

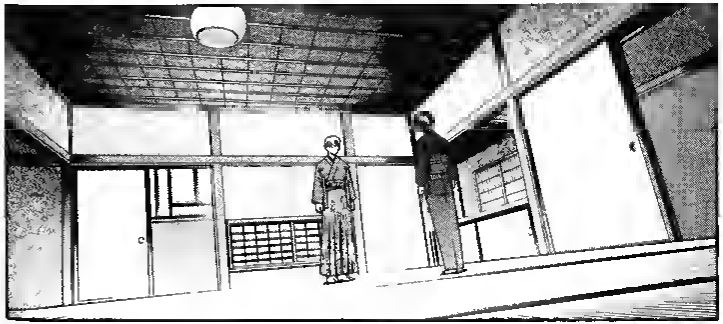
PLEASE, TELL ME THE TRUTH.
.....

DON'T YOU SEE? YOU AND I WERE DESTINED TO BE TOGETHER.

N-NO. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE I AM BETROTHED TO KAORU-SAMA.
THE REAL KAORU-SAMA! HE'S THE ONLY MAN I LOVE.

NOT YOU IT CAN NEVER BE YOU
.....

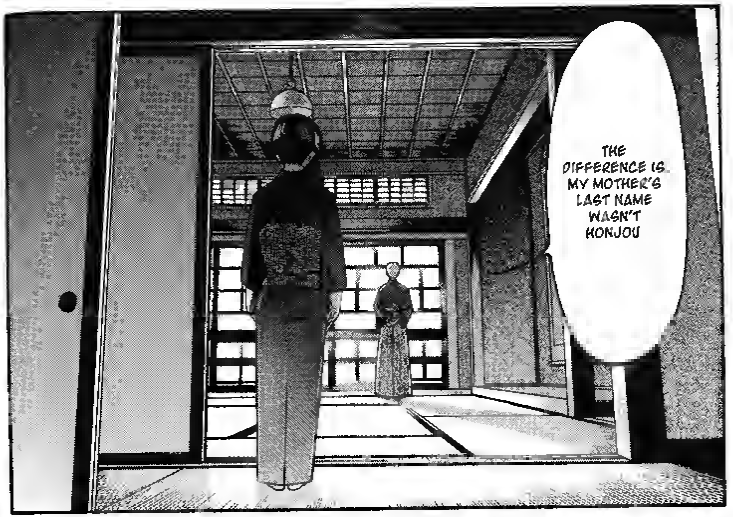
WHO ON EARTH ARE YOU REALLY?



I TRULY AM KAORU HANABISHI.

THAT'S A LIE.

IT'S NOT A LIE.
MY FATHER WAS YUJI HANABISHI


THE DIFFERENCE IS MY MOTHER'S LAST NAME WASN'T HONJOU

THEN YOU'RE KAORU-SAMA'S--
gasp

IT'S NOT SOMETHING WE GENERALLY TALK ABOUT

BUT YES HE AND I ARE HALF BROTHERS

I KNOW SOME PEOPLE HOPED THEY COULD BRING MY BROTHER BACK
HE LEFT THE HANABISHI WITH NO HEIR
MY FAMILY IS IN SPLINTERS MY FATHER WAS LOST IN AN ACCIDENT, AND MY BROTHER RAN AWAY FROM HOME

THE PERSON REFERRED TO AS KAORU HANABISHI, THE ONE THE HANABISHI AND THE SAKURABA IMAGINED
—IS REALLY NO MORE THAN A MYTH

IT'S POSSIBLE, AOI-SAN, HE MAY ONLY BE REAL IN YOUR HEART.
THEN AGAIN, THAT MAY NOT BE TRUE

BUT I'M THE ONE GRANDFATHER CALLED FOR, NOT HIM

WHETHER THAT NAME BELONGS TO MY BROTHER OR MYSELF, IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE.

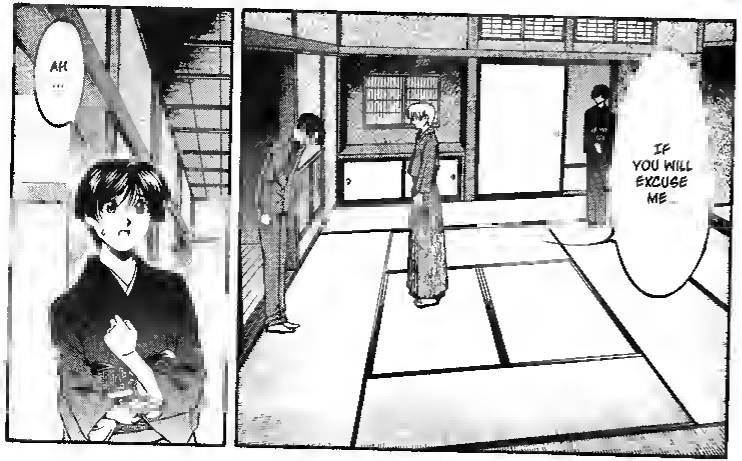
THE IDENTITY OF KAORU HANABISHI WAS INVENTED BY THE HANABISHI FAMILY TO BEGIN WITH

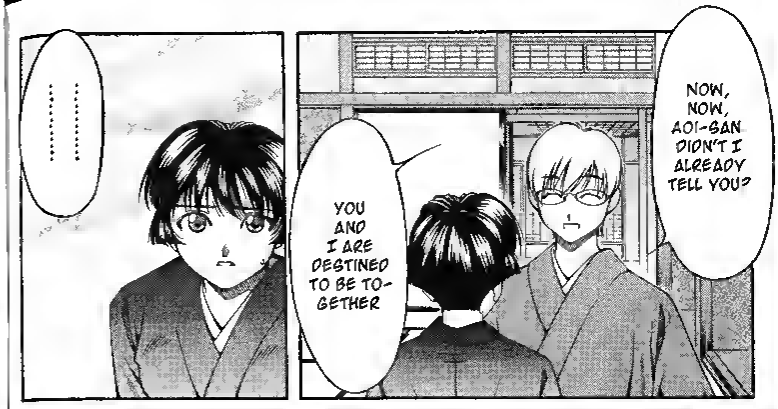
NO! N-NONE OF THIS IS TRUE!!

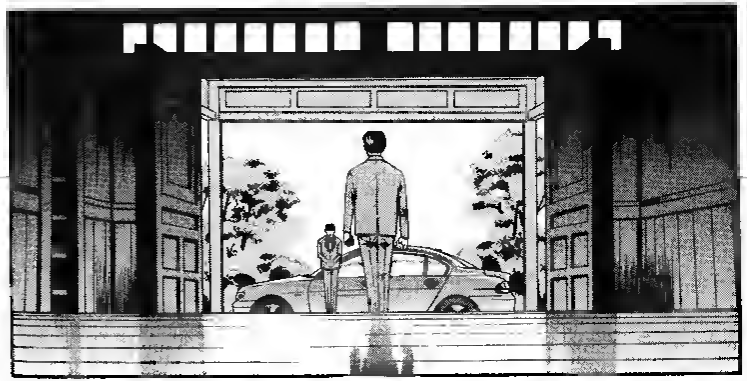
IS THAT SO...?
WHETHER HE'S A HANABISHI OR A HONJOU, KAORU-SAMA IS KAORU-SAMA.

YES, SIR.
GIVE MY REGARDS TO SOUSHI SAKURABA-DONO
YOU MAY RETURN TO YOUR EMPLOYER.
PARDON THE DELAY. I GOT TOO WRAPPED UP IN MY CONVER-SATION WITH AOI-SAN...

FATHER WAS INVOLVED AFTER ALL...?
F-FATHER!?


AH...
IF YOU WILL EXCUSE ME...


NOW, NOW, AOI-SAN DIDN'T I ALREADY TELL YOU?
YOU AND I ARE DESTINED TO BE TO-GETHER
.....

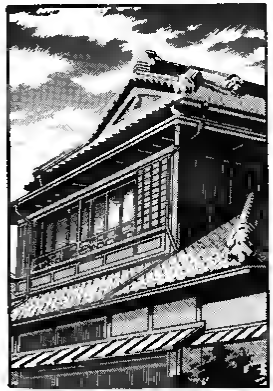


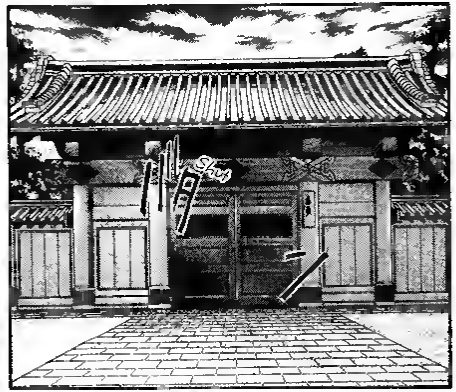
APPARENTLY, THE DRIVER'S WIFE IS GOING TO GIVE BIRTH TO THEIR SECOND CHILD ANY TIME NOW.

.....
HE HAS TO KNOW THAT IF THINGS DON'T GO WELL HERE, HE COULD LOSE HIS JOB.
IT MUST HAVE TAKEN GREAT RESOLVE TO SHUTTLE THE DAUGHTER OF THE COMPANY AROUND TODAY.

EVEN SO, FOR THE SAKE OF HIS FAMILY, FOR THE SAKE OF HIS CHILDREN, HE DID WHAT HE HAD TO DO

A PARENT WILL DO ANYTHING FOR HIS CHILD'S HAPPINESS, NO MATTER WHO MAY HATE HIM FOR IT.





HE'S REALLY JUST CONCERNED FOR YOU

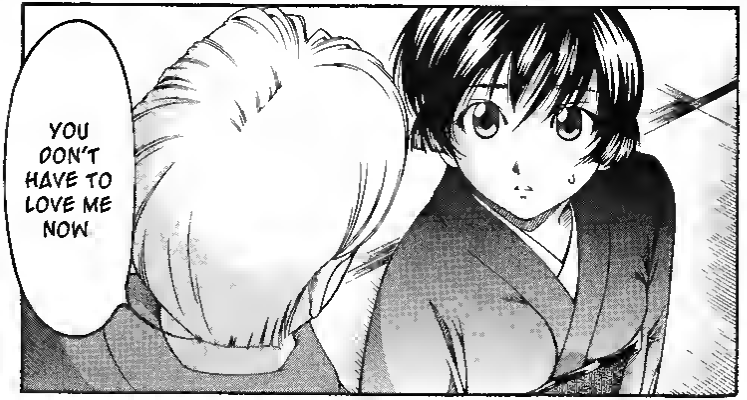
CAN'T YOU TRY TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOUR FATHER FEELS, AOI-SAN?

IT'S PRETTY CLEAR TO ME, AOI-SAN, THAT YOU LOVE YOUR FATHER MORE THAN YOU CARE TO ADMIT

WHAT IF YOUR FATHER REALLY HAD COLLAPSED TODAY?
WHAT IF HE HAD DIED?

.....

AOI-SAN.


YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOVE ME NOW.

AOI-SAN, WHAT WOULD YOU WISH YOU'D SAID TO HIM IF HE WERE GONE?
FLINCH

I...

I...

THE MEMBERS OF THE SAKURABA AND THE HANAFUSHI
AND THEIR FAMILIES
YOUR FATHER AND THE PEOPLE AROUND HIM...
YOU COULD GROW TO LOVE ME LITTLE BY LITTLE.
I HAVE ACCEPTED ALL OF THEM.
THAT'S WHY I'M HERE NOW.
EVEN IF THAT WERE TRUE, I WOULD ACCEPT YOU, AOI-SAN.
IT'S YOUR HAPPINESS THAT MATTERS.
I UNDERSTAND THERE MAY BE NO ROOM IN YOUR HEART FOR ME, IN WHICH CASE YOU WOULDN'T EVER LOVE ME AT ALL.

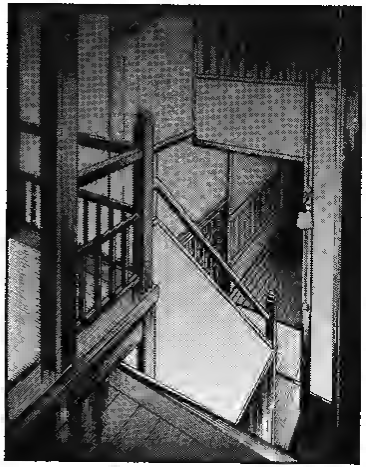
藍より青し

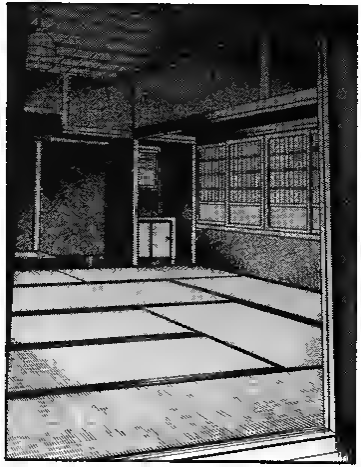
AI YORI AOSHI

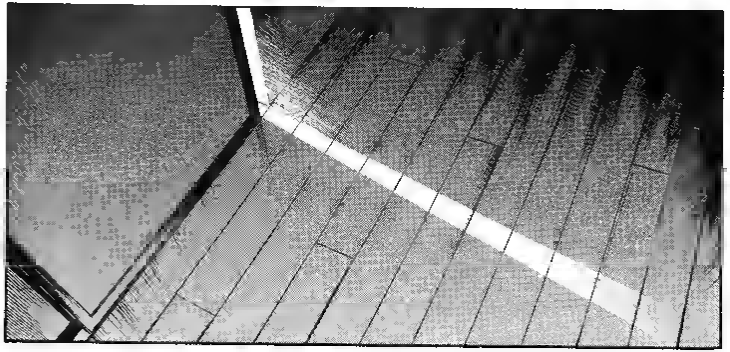
Chapter 124: Jubaku—Curse

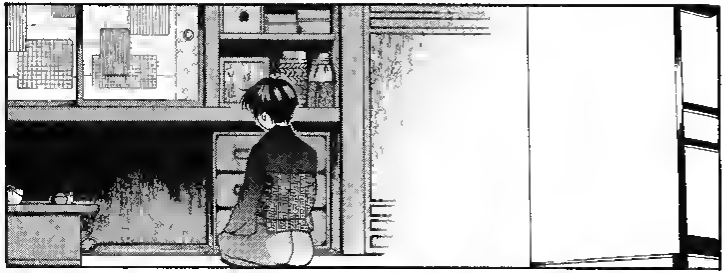
ONLY ONE OF US KEEPS BETRAYING THE FAMILY, REJECTING THEM.
SHE REJECTS THE FEELINGS OF EVERYONE DEAR TO HER
IT'S YOU, AOI-SAN.
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE.

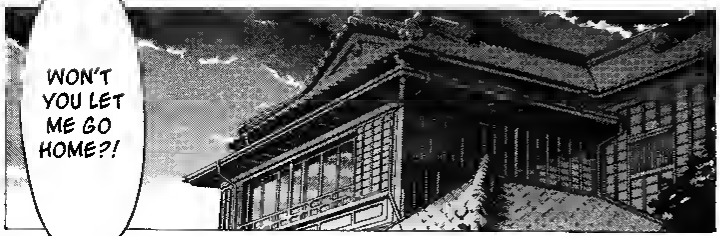
End of Chapter 124: Fumie—Rebuke

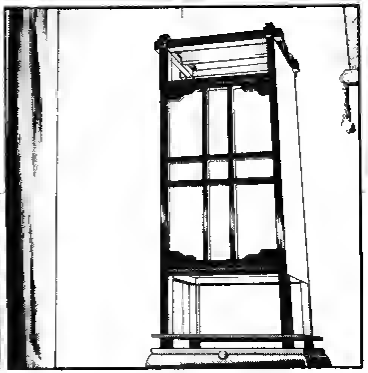






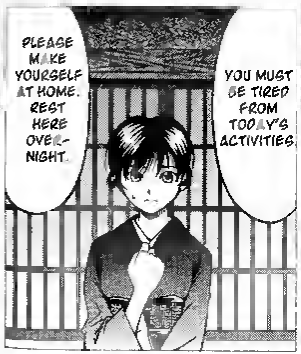


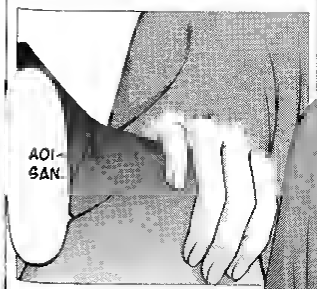

WON'T YOU LET ME GO HOME?!



I WANT YOU TO ALWAYS BE BY MY SIDE

YOU CAN LEAVE WHENEVER YOU WANT, AOI-SAN.
HOWEVER...


PLEASE MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME. REST HERE OVER-NIGHT.
YOU MUST BE TIRED FROM TODAY'S ACTIVITIES.


AOI-SAN.

I CAN'T LET YOU GO HOME IN YOUR CURRENT STATE.

whisper
I WONDER IF KAORU-SAMA HAS GONE TO BED ALREADY?

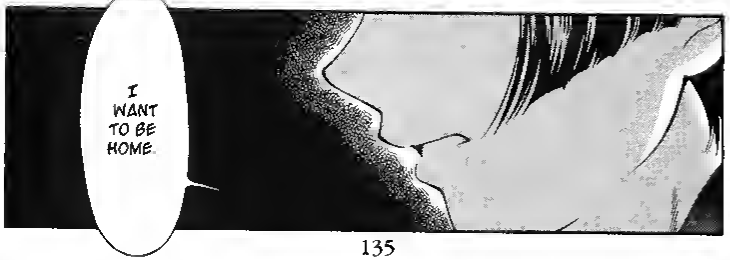
HE STAYED UP ALL NIGHT COMFORTING ME HE MUST BE EXHAUSTED.

EITHER WAY, I'LL MAKE HIM SOMETHING SUPER NUTRITIOUS WHEN I GET BACK.

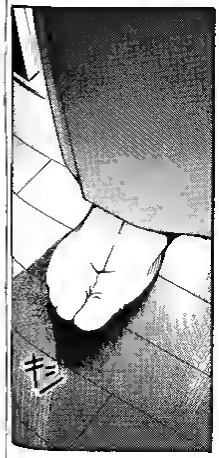
DID HE EVEN REMEMBER TO FEED HIMSELF?
I WONDER WHAT HE ATE TODAY?

FISH WITH A SIDE OF SPINACH, MAYBE...

OH, MY...


I WANT TO BE HOME.

I REALLY SHOULD GO.
KAORU-SAMA IS WAITING FOR ME.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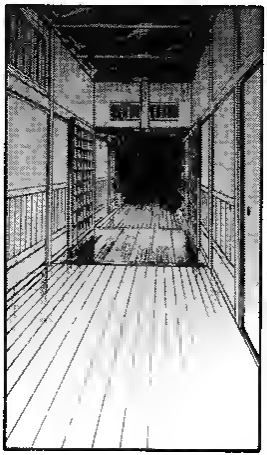

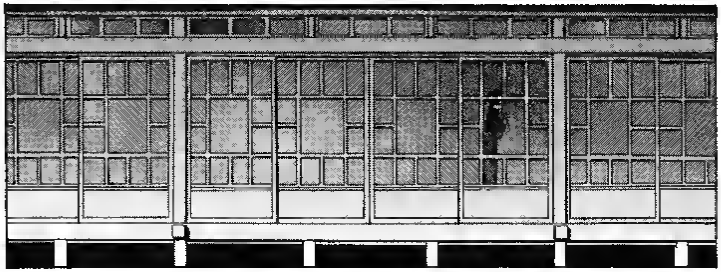

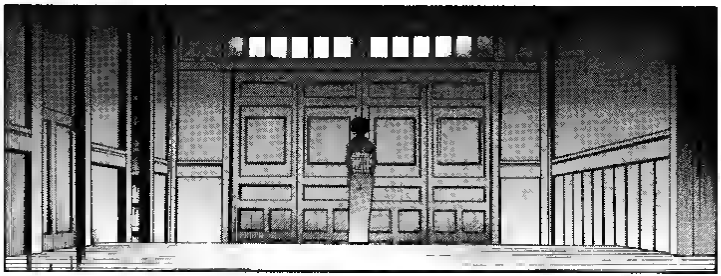

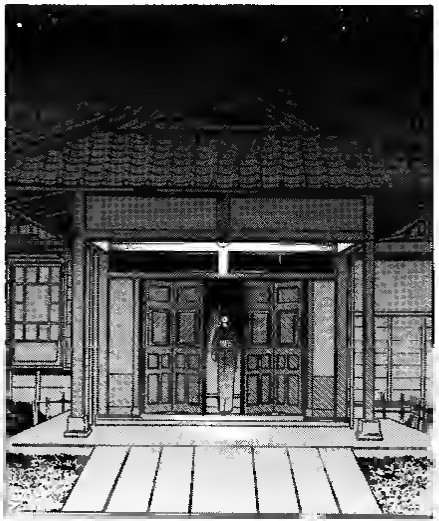

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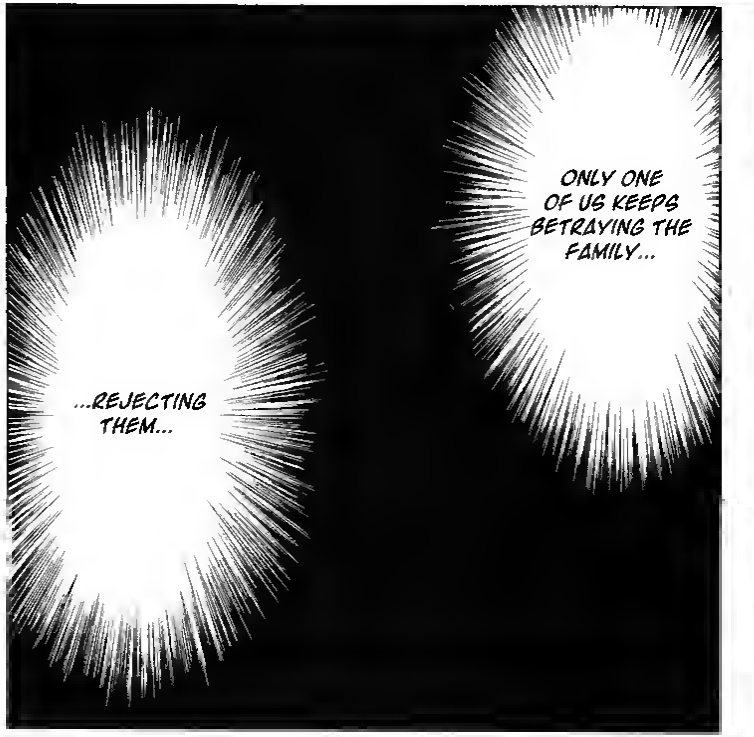
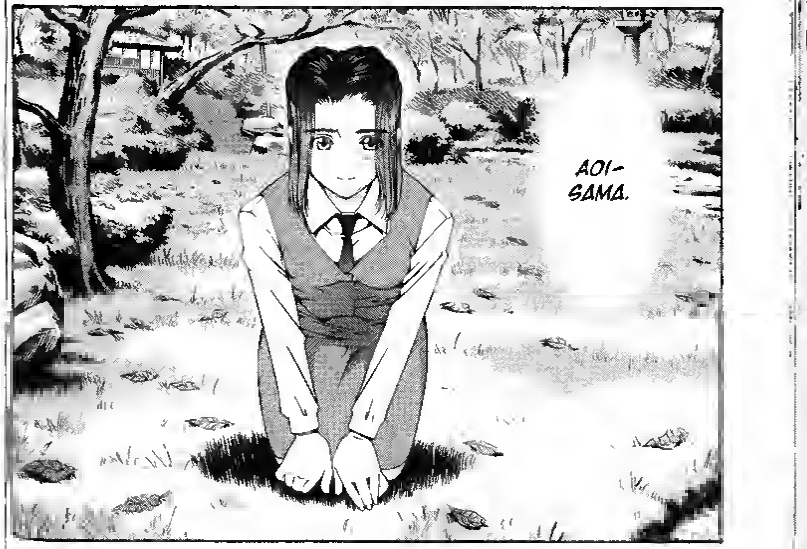
MY FATHER ...
WHAT WOULD YOU WISH YOU'D SAID TO HIM IF HE WERE GONE?
AOI...
FLINCH
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE, AOI-SAN.

THE MEMBERS OF THE SAKURABA AND THE HANABISHI AND THEIR FAMILIES.


ONLY ONE OF US KEEPS BETRAYING THE FAMILY...
...REJECTING THEM...

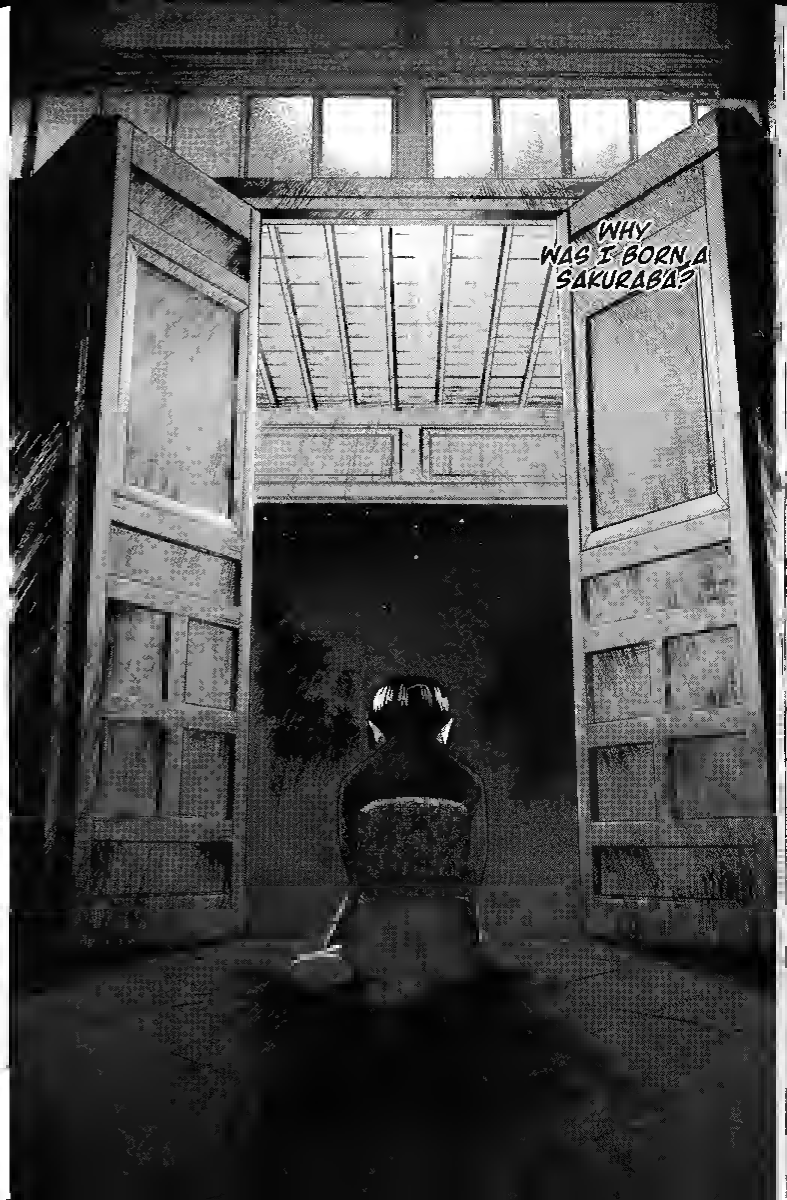
THE FEELINGS OF EVERYONE DEAR TO HER
AOI.


AOI-SAMA.

IT'S YOU, AOI-SAN.
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE.
WHY...?
drip
drip
drip
drop

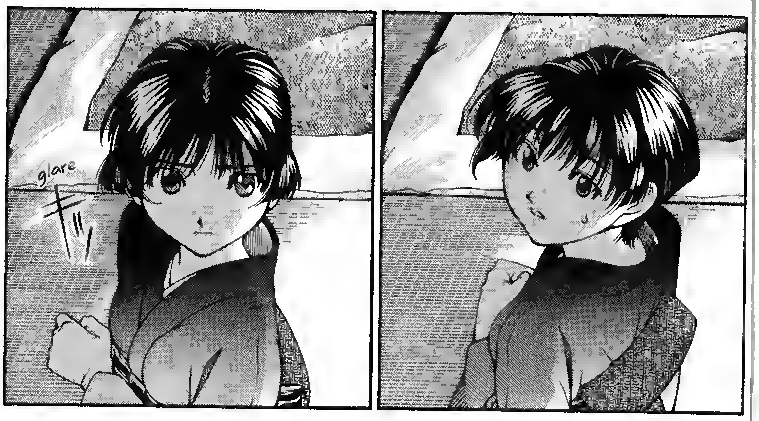
I JUST WANT TO BE WITH KAORU-SAMA ALWAYS.
I JUST WANT TO BE WITH THE ONE I LOVE.
SO... WHY??

KAORU-SAMA...
グス
SNIFFLE


WHY WAS I BORN A SAKURABA?

Chapter 126: Shukui—Old Grudge

End of Chapter 125: Jubaku—Curse


glare

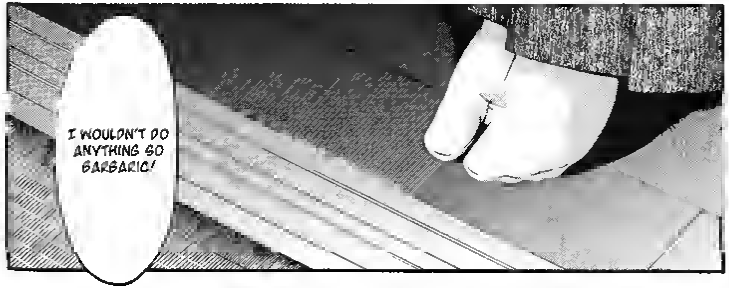
I KNEW IN MY HEART YOU'D COME BACK.

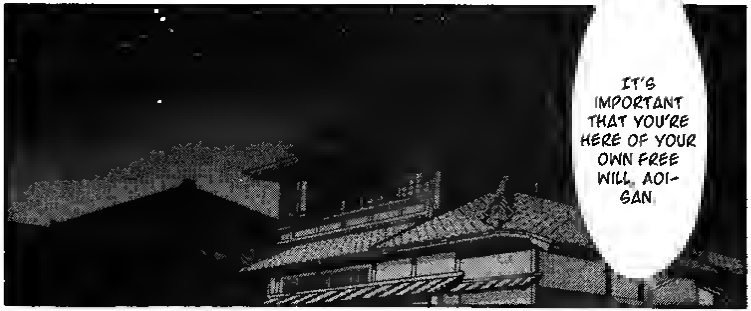
...AOI-SAN.

Ba-bum

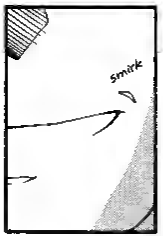
EVERYTHING I'VE BELIEVED IS COMING TRUE. I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T LEAVE.

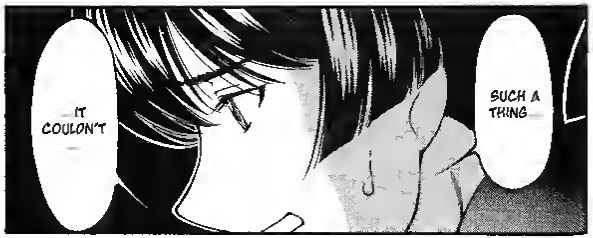
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DEFEND YOURSELF.


I WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING SO BARBARIC!


IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU'RE HERE OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL, AOI-SAN.

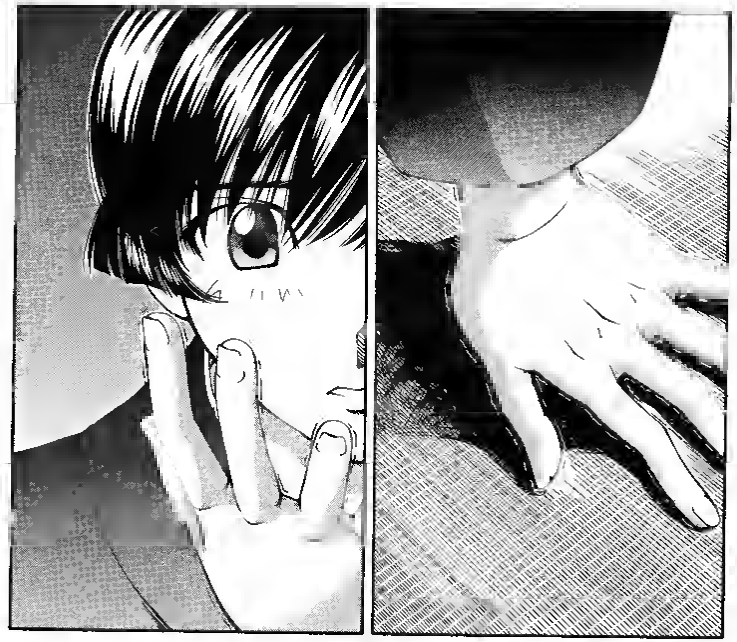
IT GIVES ME HOPE THAT WE CAN ACTUALLY BE TOGETHER. THAT YOU CAN ACCEPT ME AS KAORU HANABISHI.


Smirk

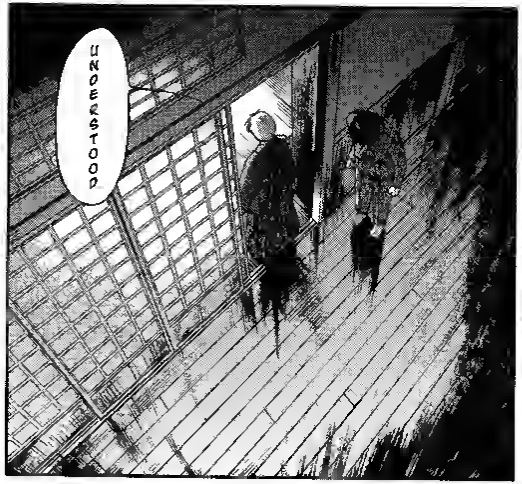

IT COULDN'T
SUCH A THING

IF ANYTHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO YOU, AOI-SAN, I DON'T KNOW HOW I'D EXPLAIN IT TO YOUR FATHER
PLEASE, RELAX ENOUGH FOR TODAY

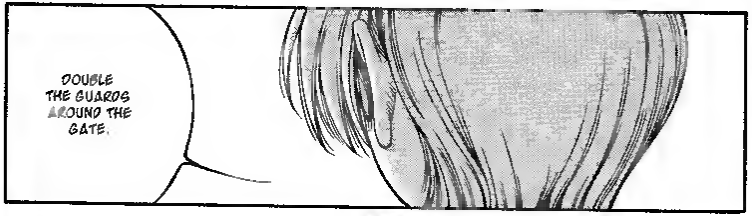
drop
SIGH



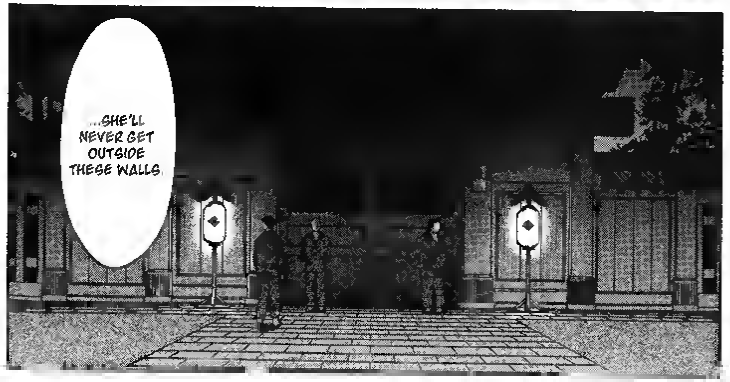
MY KAORU-SAMA...

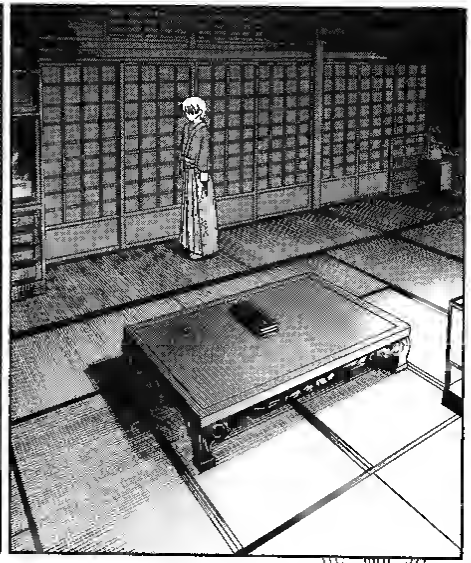

UNDERSTOOD

KAORU-SAMA, WE'VE GOTTEN WORD FROM THE SAKURAGA A DATE FOR THE ENGAGEMENT HAS BEEN SET


DOUBLE THE GUARDS AROUND THE GATE.

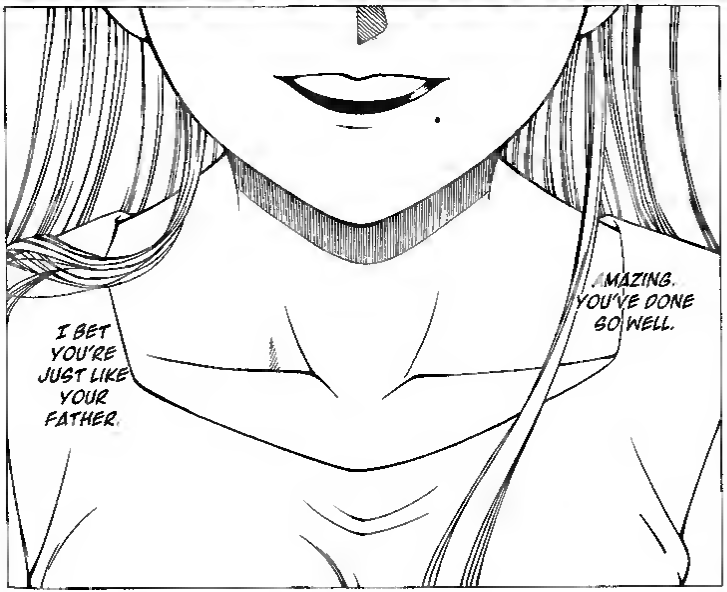
I WANT IT SO THAT EVEN IF AOI SAKURABA LEAVES THE MANSION...


...SHE'LL NEVER GET OUTSIDE THESE WALLS.

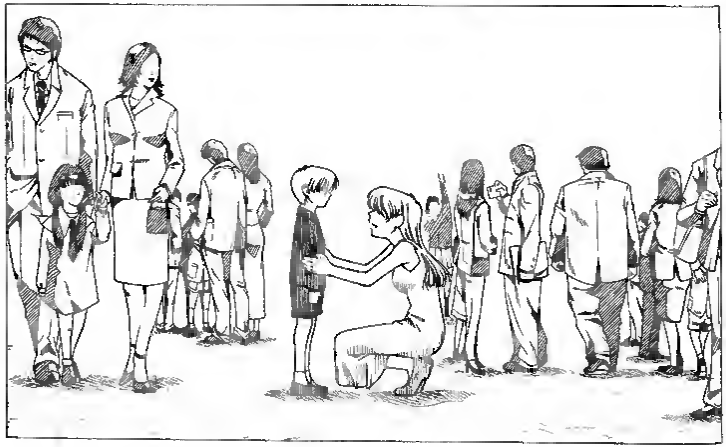


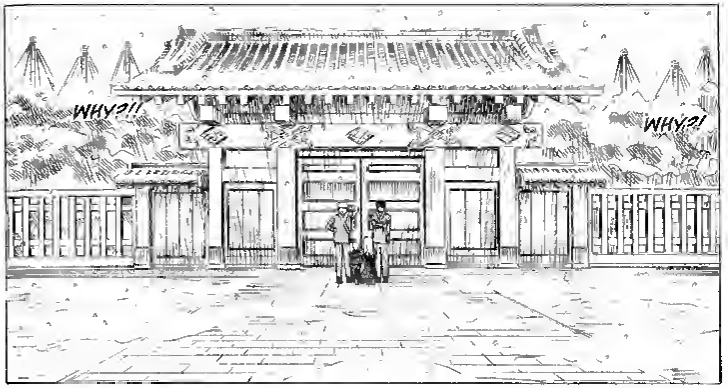
HOW COULD I EVER LET HER GO? IF I GET AOI SAKURABA ...
...EVERY-THING WILL BE MINE.

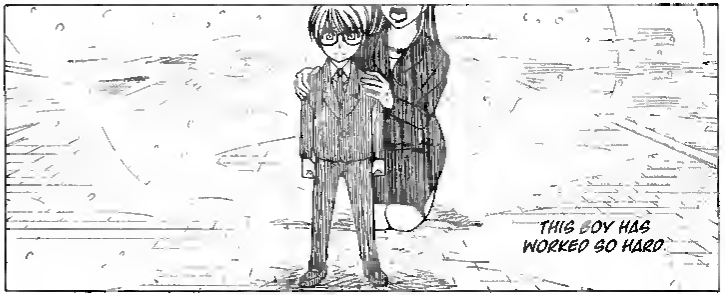
I'VE DREAMED ABOUT THIS EVER SINCE I WAS A CHILD.
SCHOOL ENTRANCE CEREMONY


I BET YOU'RE JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER.
AMAZING. YOU'VE DONE SO WELL.

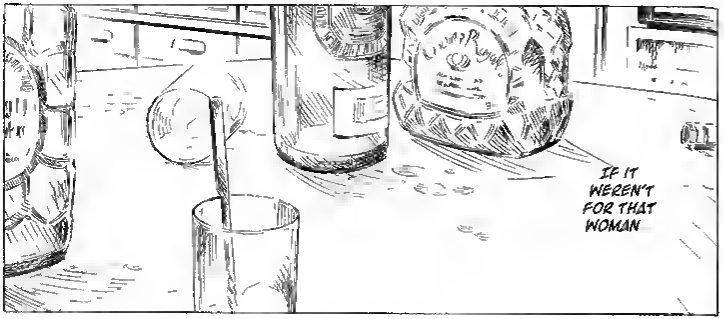
YOU ARE THE HANABISHI'S LEGITIMATE HEIR.
YOU ARE ONE VERY SPECIAL BOY.

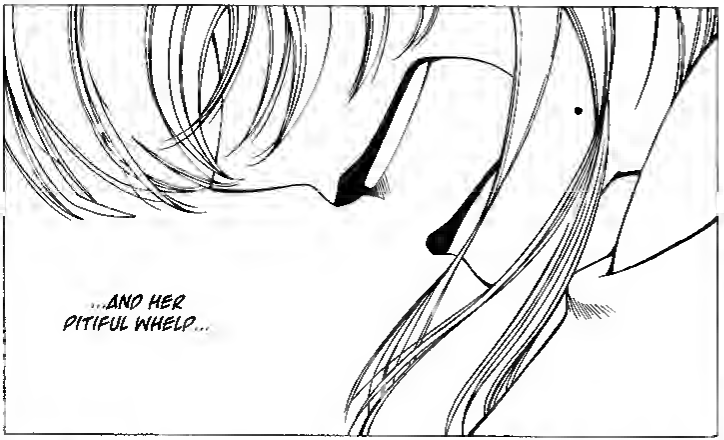



WHY?!
WHY?!


THIS BOY HAS WORKED SO HARD

HE WANTS IT MORE THAN ANYONE

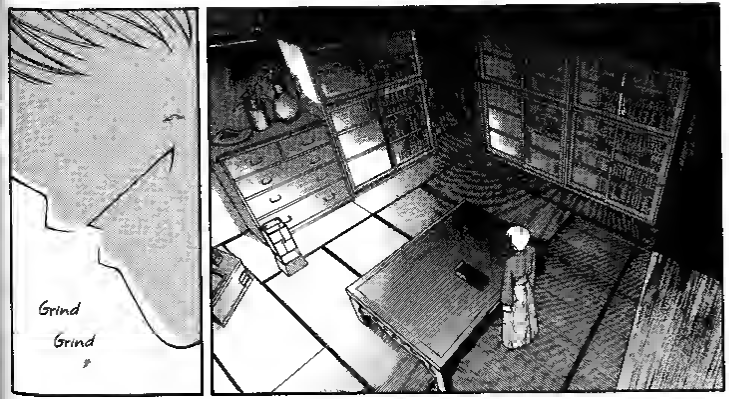

IF IT WEREN'T FOR THAT WOMAN


...AND HER PITIFUL WHELP...

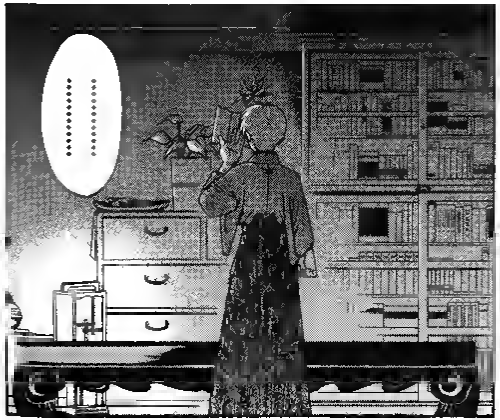
IF ONLY THAT LITTLE BASTARD WOULD DISAPPEAR FROM THIS WORLD

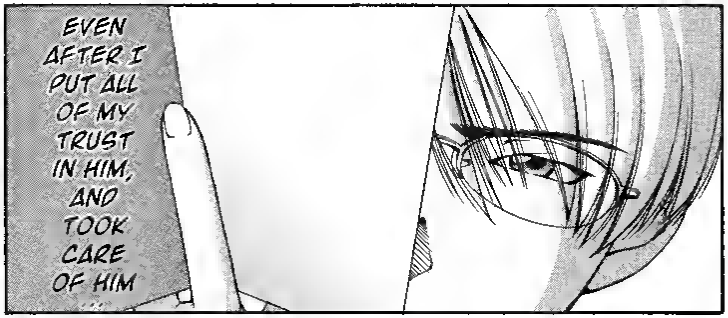
WISHING FOR THE MISFORTUNE OF OTHERS IS IN MY DNA.
Grind
Grind
Grind

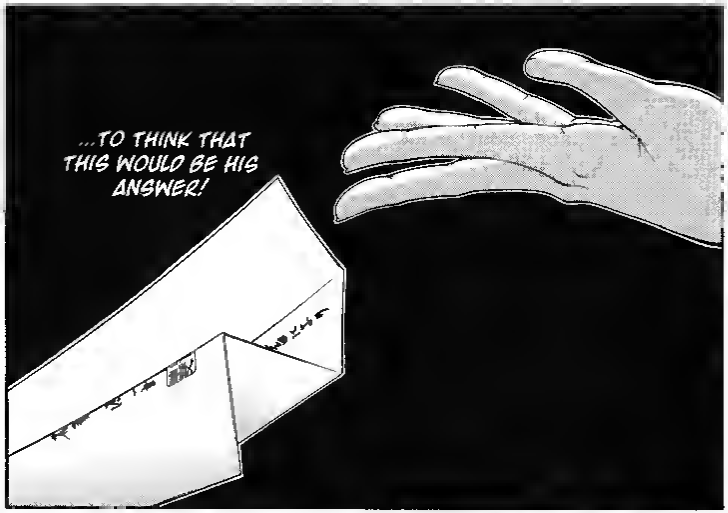
A WORLD WITH NO KAORU HANABISHI!

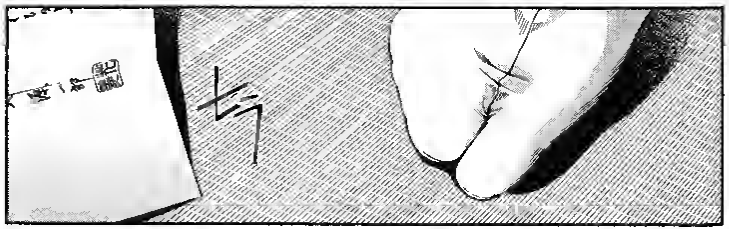

Grind
Grind

THROUGH OTHERS' MISFORTUNE ...
...I'VE ALWAYS MOVED FORWARD, GETTING EVER CLOSER TO MY GOAL.

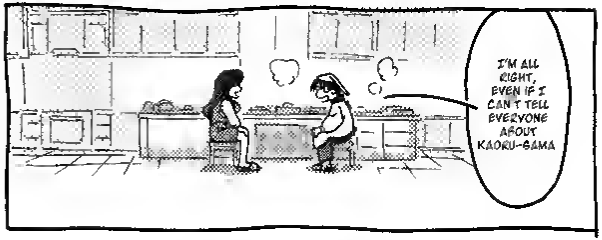

.....

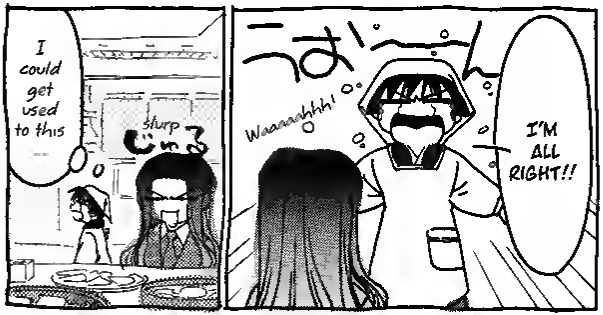

EVEN AFTER I PUT ALL OF MY TRUST IN HIM, AND TOOK CARE OF HIM ...


...TO THINK THAT THIS WOULD BE HIS ANSWER!



Ai-Ao Theatre, Part 31: Relieving Stress





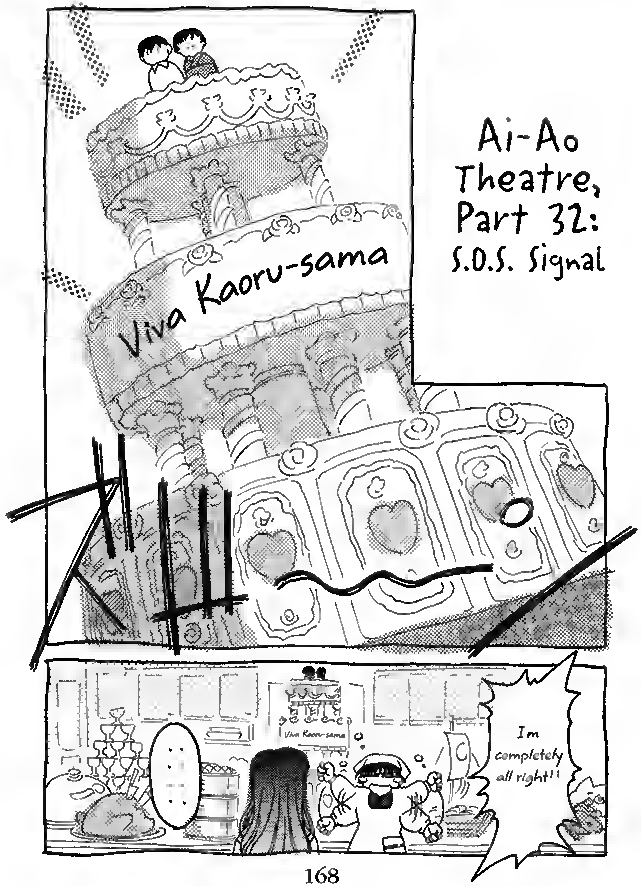
BUT EVEN THIS WILL COME WITH TIME...

In acc... with 'i... the w... of Gen'ichiro Hanabishi are as follows:

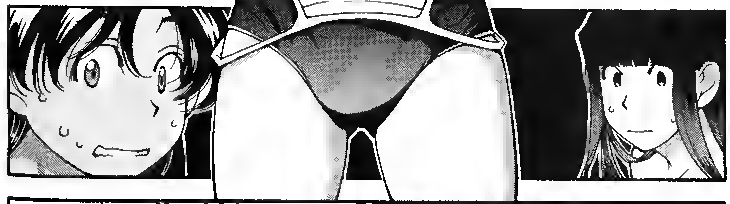
Firstly, I leave the Hanabishi estate to the one who is bound in marriage to Aoi ...aba of the ...roba family.

A LITTLE PATIENCE, AND IT WILL ALL BE MINE.

End of Chapter 126 Shukui—Old Grudge

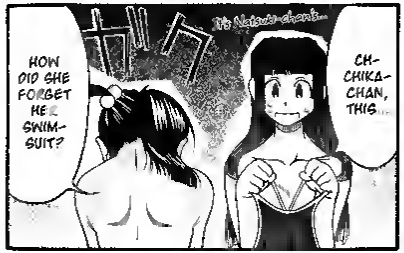


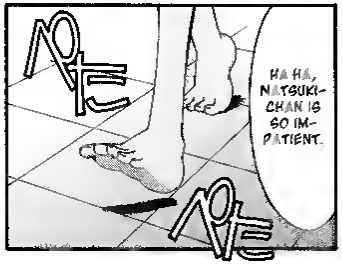
Ai-Ao Theatre, Part 32: S.O.S. Signal

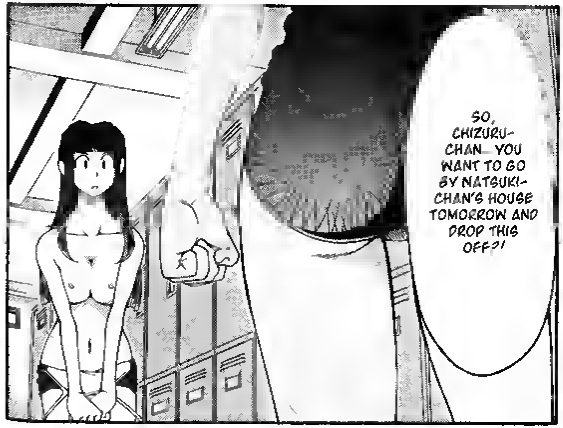


* English translation: "You in Winter."

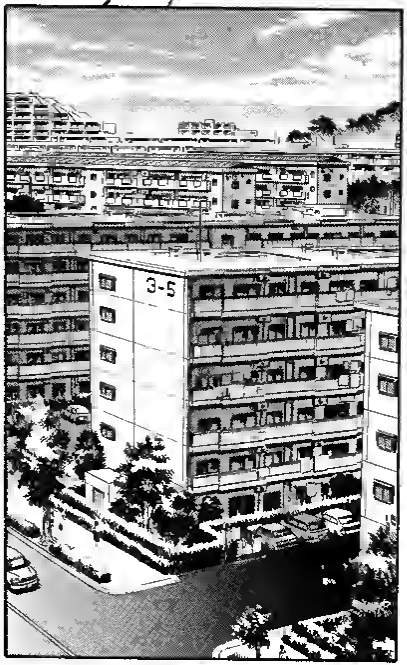
Waaaahhhhh!


It's Natsuki-chan's...
HOW DID SHE FORGET HER SWIM-SUIT?
CH-CHIKA-CHAN, THIS...


HA HA, NATSUKI-CHAN IS SO IM-PATIENT.


SO, CHIZURU-CHAN... YOU WANT TO GO BY NATSUKI-CHAN'S HOUSE TOMORROW AND DROP THIS OFF?!

Y-yeah...
IT'S OPERATION GO UNEXPECTEDLY AND SURPRISE NATSUKI-CHAN!!

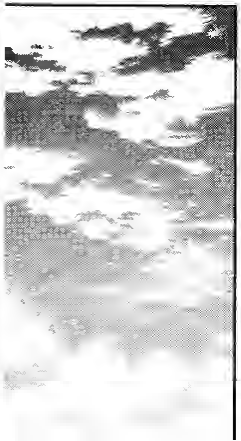

3-5

THE UNEXPECTED PART WAS US GETTING LOST.
I KNOW IT'S AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE
WE CAN'T! WE MUST KEEP TRYING !!
I won't give up!
wheeze wheeze
Call her!
MAYBE WE SHOULD GIVE UP AND HAVE HER COME GET US?

I WILL SEE NATSUKI-CHAN'S SURPRISED FACE!!
Collapse
EHHH? CHIZURU-CHAN, WHAT'S WRONG?
Awawawah!
CH-CH-CHIKA-CHAN OVER THERE!
EH?!

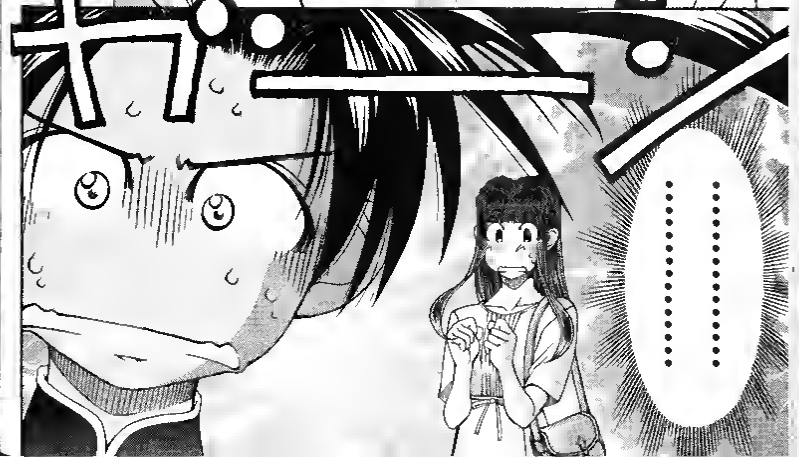
YAAAAH! WE'VE BEEN SPOTTED!!
HEY, CHIKA! CHIZURU!!
HUH?!

UH, I, THAT IS... UM...
Friends of yours?
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING HERE?



WA-WAIT, CHIZURU-CHAN!!

AH!
I'M SORRY !!

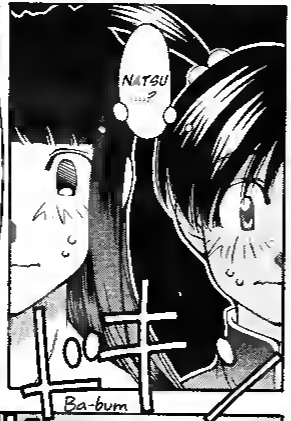

ポーン
.....

THESE GIRLS ARE ONEE-CHAN'S FRIENDS. SAY HELLO, EVERYONE!
こんにちわぉ
Hello!
はぁ
Sigh!
IT'S TOUGH WHEN YOU'RE NOT USED TO IT, HUH?

flip
Run Run Run
NATSUKI-ONEECHAN ...
Ow... What's This?
WHAT'S THIS?!
ゴラァ
HYAAAHH!!
FUUTA, KAPPEI, I TOLD YOU TO STOP PRANKING PEOPLE!!
やった
We did it!

OH! YOU'RE THOSE GIRLS FROM NATSU'S CLUB. SHE ALWAYS TALKS ABOUT YOU.

WHO'RE YOU, KEI? MY OLDER BROTHER?!
HER CARELESS-NESS ISN'T GETTING YOU GUYS INTO TROUBLE, IS IT?

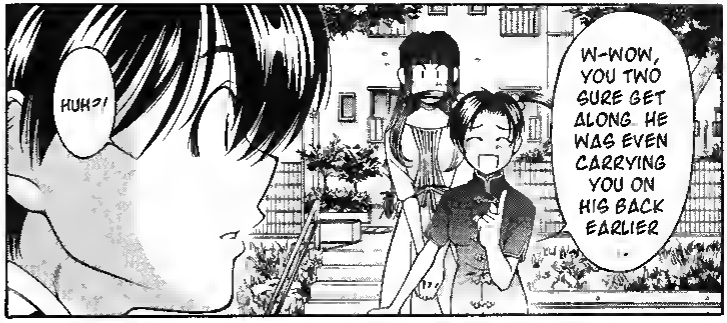

NATSU...?
Ba-bum

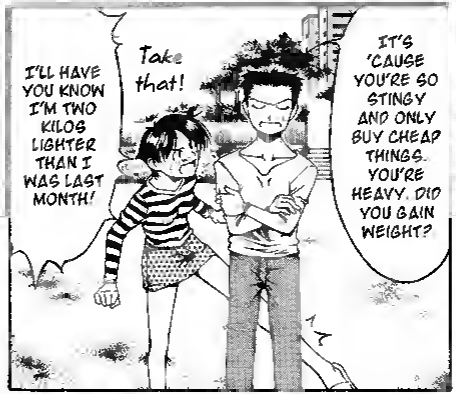
Ba-bum
Ba-bum
KEI...?
Ba-bum
Ba-bum

DOES THAT INCLUDE THAT BOY?
A LOT OF THE KIDS IN THESE APARTMENTS HAVE TWO PARENTS WHO WORK, SO WE LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER LIKE BROTHERS AND SISTERS

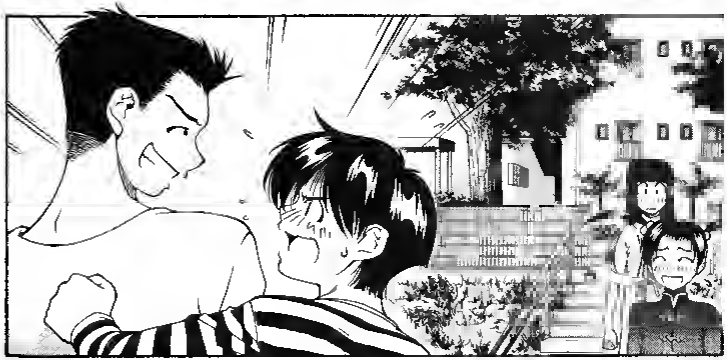
LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO MY CLASS-MATES CHIKA AND CHIZURU.

HEY, KEISUKE!!
HIM? HE'S MY CHILDHOOD FRIEND KEISUKE. WE LIVE IN THE SAME COMPLEX.


HUH?!
W-WOW, YOU TWO SURE GET ALONG. HE WAS EVEN CARRYING YOU ON HIS BACK EARLIER.

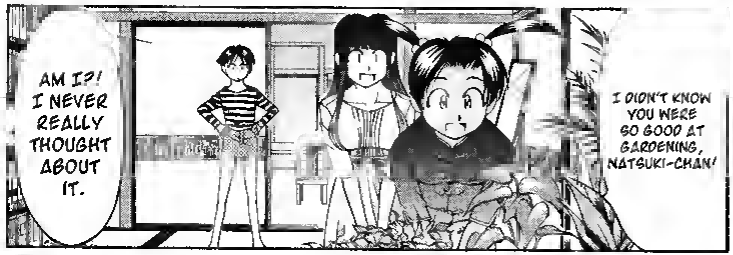

I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW I'M TWO KILOS LIGHTER THAN I WAS LAST MONTH!
Take that!
IT'S 'CAUSE YOU'RE SO STINGY AND ONLY BUY CHEAP THINGS. YOU'RE HEAVY. DID YOU GAIN WEIGHT?

Ah ha ha!
OH, THAT WAS BECAUSE MY SANDAL BROKE WHILE WE WERE SHOPPING TOGETHER.



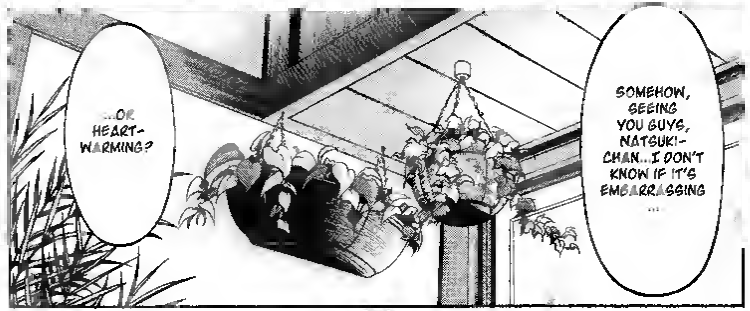
S-SURE
SO, ARE YOU GUYS COMING UP TO MY APARTMENT?

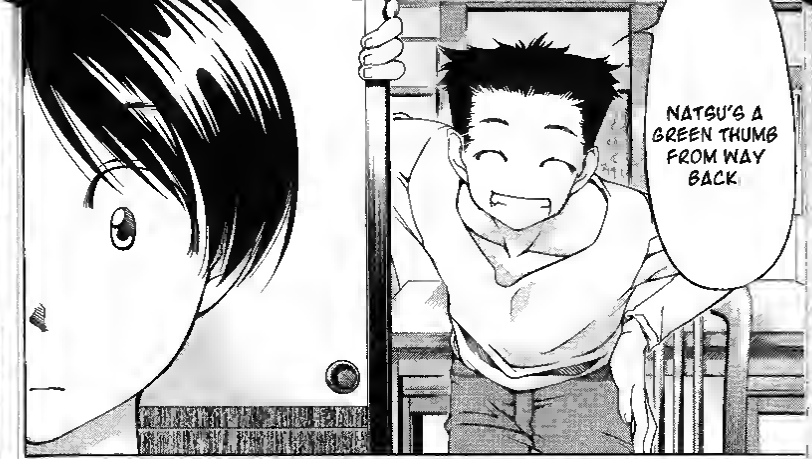
WHOAAAA!!

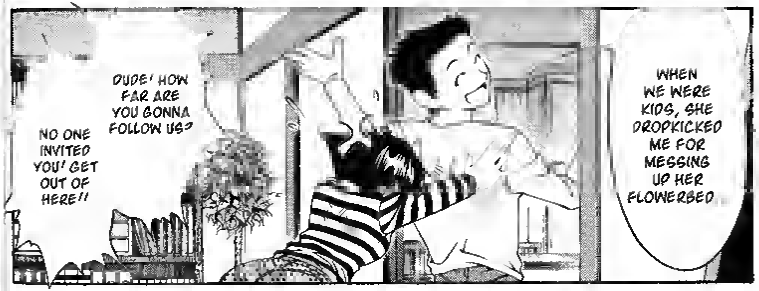

AM I?! I NEVER REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE SO GOOD AT GARDENING, NATSUKI-CHAN!

N-NOTHING. IT'S NOTHING... RIGHT?
R-RIGHT.

Silence...
?!


SOMEHOW, SEEING YOU GUYS, NATSUKI-CHAN...I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S EMBARRASSING...
...OR HEART-WARMING?


NATSU'S A GREEN THUMB FROM WAY BACK.


WHEN WE WERE KIDS, SHE DROPKICKED ME FOR MESSING UP HER FLOWERBED.
DUDE! HOW FAR ARE YOU GONNA FOLLOW US?
NO ONE INVITED YOU! GET OUT OF HERE!!

SIGH
SOMETHING WRONG?

SHUT UP!!
YOU'RE JUST SCARED I'LL TELL THEM EVERYTHING I KNOW.

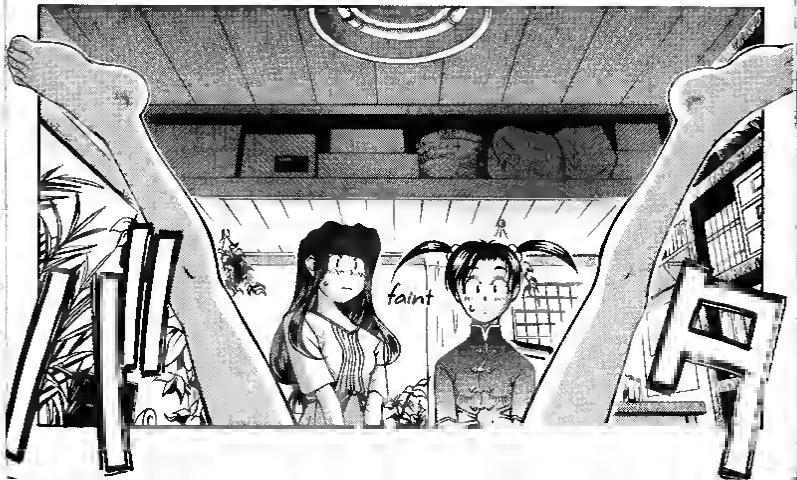
GIVE ME A BREAK!
THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO WAY!

psst
psst
MAYBE NATSUKI-CHAN JUST DOESN'T REALIZE...

psst
UM, HER ACTIONS SAY OTHERWISE.
ばたばた
CAN'T YOU TELL BY LOOKING AT US? WE'RE NOT LIKE THAT!
ばた

Ooooohh!! I want a man!!
男欲しい～!!
B-BUT THAT'S NOT REALLY TRUE, IS IT?
IT MADE ME ASSUME YOU WERE LIKE ME AND HAD NO BOYS IN YOUR LIFE AT ALL.
YOU KEEP SAYING YOU WANT A BOYFRIEND, NATSUKI-CHAN.

nod コク
YOU MEAN ME AND KEI?!


faint
ガク

MAYBE I SHOULD GO WITH YOU. IT'S BEEN GETTING DANGEROUS AROUND HERE LATELY.

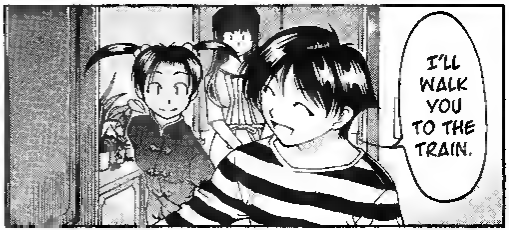
OH, YOU'RE GOING HOME ALREADY?
PARDON OUR INTRUSION.
YEAH. I'M TAKING THEM TO THE STATION.

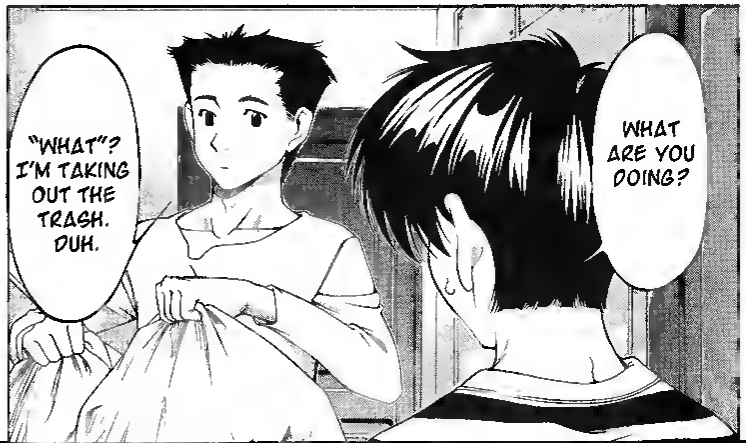
Grr...
smile
smile
smile
smile

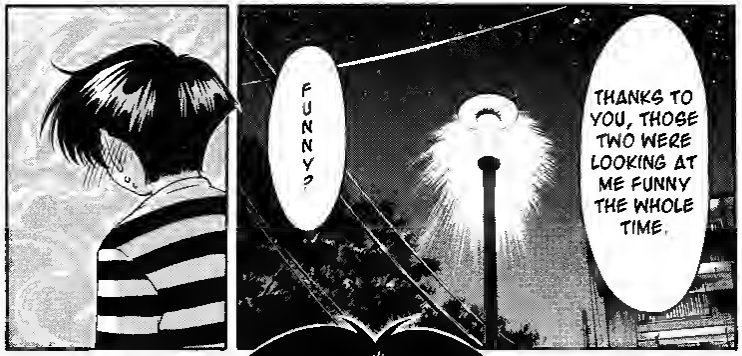
W-WE'RE NOT--
WHAT?
STOP IMAGINING WEIRD THINGS, YOU TWO!!

THANKS FOR HAVING US OVER!

Ugh...

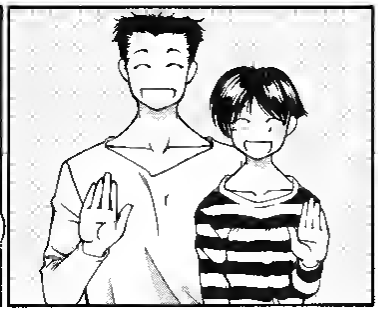

I'LL WALK YOU TO THE TRAIN.

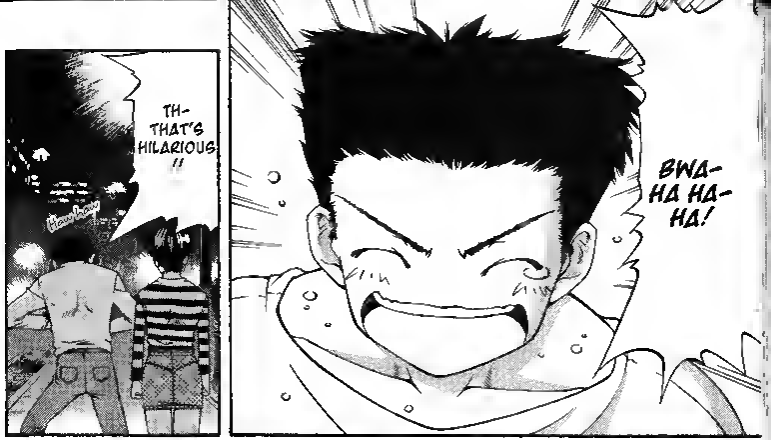

"WHAT"? I'M TAKING OUT THE TRASH. DUH.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?



SIGN: Sugiura Station

THAT'S WHAT I WAS WORRIED ABOUT, MOZON I PROTECT THE CRIMINALS
You don't know how to hold back
WHY DID YOU INSIST ON COMING?
I can take out any pervert with one hit




TH-THAT'S HILARIOUS!!
BWA-HA HA-HA!

.....
Heeeee!
My stomach hurts...

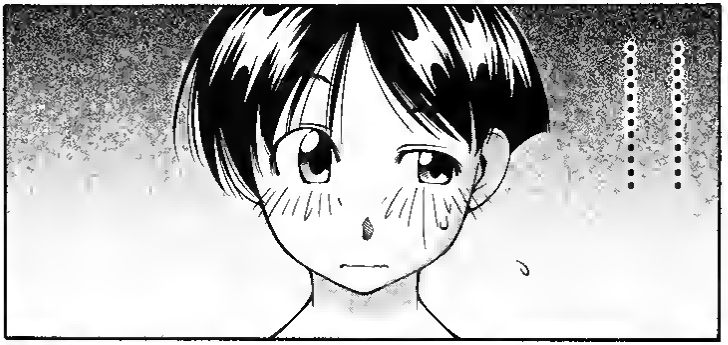
YEAH... ISN'T IT?

BUT, HEY...

IT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD, WOULD IT?

ほお
blush
KEI... A-ARE YOU SERIOUS?!

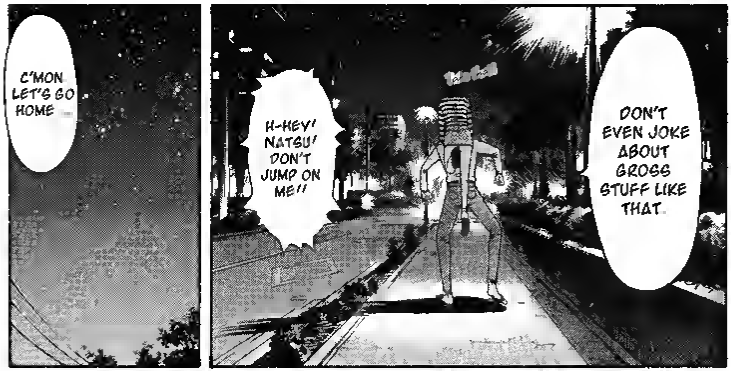
HMMM... WHO KNOWS? I DON'T REALLY KNOW MYSELF.



BUT, WELL...

藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI

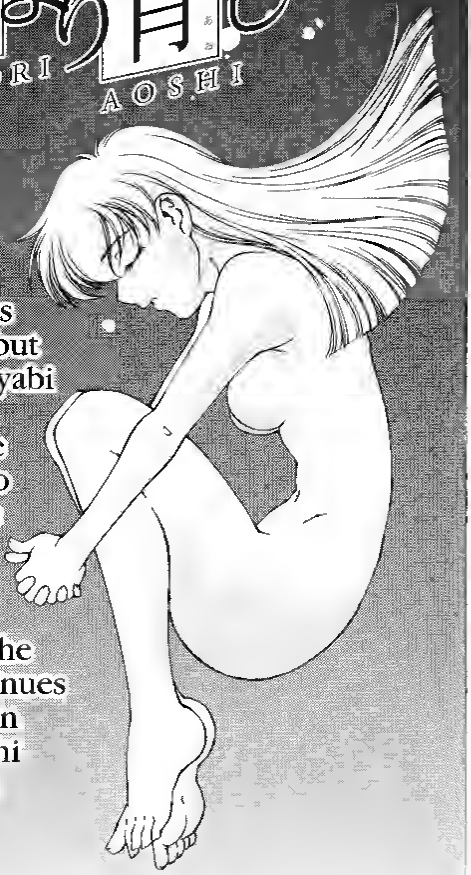


End of Special Chapter: Osananajimi—Childhood Friends

NEXT TIME IN

藍より青し

AI YORI AOSHI



With Aoi missing, Kaoru is sick with worry. Tina suggests that they visit Aoi...but before they can, Miyabi returns with some shocking news. The boarding house is to close, and everyone has one night to pack their belongings and leave! Meanwhile, the other "Kaoru" continues to woo Aoi so he can inherit the Hanabishi family fortune. Will Kaoru's true love be lost forever?

assist thanks

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